Going to War in the Persian Gulf:
A Comparative History of the United States Decision to Go to War with Iraq in 1991 and 2003

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis/project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Laurens J. Visser

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It has been a long and winding road at RMIT University and it would be remiss of me to fail to acknowledge the help and assistance I’ve received along the way.

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Introduction

"A favorite theory of mine—to wit, that no occurrence is sole and solitary, but is merely a repetition of a thing which has happened before, and perhaps often."¹

In 2004, at the Baghdad Operations Center, the deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was held as a detainee by the FBI for a series of interviews. Agent George Piro was responsible for interrogating Saddam before he was handed over to the newly created Iraqi government, taking advantage of the opportunity to press the fallen dictator for insight into his leadership and decision-making. In the resulting interviews and conversations, which include casual conversations in Saddam’s prison cell, Piro tried to elicit incriminating information from Saddam about the existence of weapons of mass destruction and Iraqi links to terrorism. However, the façade of the evil Iraqi dictator that had been compounded by the U.S., and had guided Americans into war with Iraq twice, was not vindicated. In one casual conversation, Piro pressed Saddam for the reason he was so obstinate toward the United Nations weapons inspections. According to Saddam, the reluctance to open Iraq up to weapons inspectors was a strategic regional move, not because of the threat posed by the U.S. towards Iraq, but because of the threat posed by Iran. Saddam explained that while the United Nations dismantled Iraq’s military capabilities and crippled their economy with sanctions throughout the 1990s, Iran continued to advance technologically. Saddam confided in Piro that “Iraq would have been extremely vulnerable to an attack from Iran, and [Iraq] would have sought a security agreement with the United States to protect it from

¹ Mark Twain, *The Jumping Frog: In English, Then in French, Then Clawed Back into a Civilized Language Once More by Patient, Unremunerated Toil* (Harper Brothers, 1903), 64.
threats in the region.” Although Saddam admitted that a security arrangement with the U.S. would have been improbable, he understood Iraq would not succeed in a war against the U.S. In another conversation that explored allegations that Saddam was working with terrorists, Saddam was adamant that he had never cooperated with those he deemed “zealots.” When asked by Piro why he would not align himself with those he described as the enemies of the U.S., Saddam replied that “the United States was not Iraq’s enemy.”

According to Saddam, had he wanted “to cooperate with the enemies of the United States,” he would have approached “North Korea, which he claimed to have a relationship with, or China.” It was not the U.S. that Saddam described as an enemy, only that there were U.S. policies that were in conflict with Iraqi interests.

These casual conversations, which were released in 2009, illustrated a picture of Saddam Hussein that was largely absent from the history that shows the U.S. going to war with Iraq. The history was further muddled when Saddam Hussein insisted, in another conversation with Piro, that he was fascinated by the U.S., and “was interested in understanding the American culture, and did so by watching American movies.” However, the conversations also raise questions about why it was that the U.S. found itself at war with Iraq in 2003, after having already gone to war with Iraq in 1991, and in both cases confronting Saddam Hussein. If Saddam Hussein was not the enemy of the U.S. that he was made out to be, but instead a dictator obsessed with his regional interests, and with a window that faced Hollywood, what prompted George H. W. Bush in 1991, and George W. Bush in 2003, to decide to intervene militarily in the Persian Gulf. Therefore, this research looks to compare the history of two American presidents and their decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. The research is focused on President George H. W. Bush, and President George W.

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Going to War in the Persian Gulf

Introduction

Bush, and aims to articulate the *domestic and diplomatic* origins of both the 1991 and 2003 decisions to go to war. Ultimately, this research will identify the similarities shared between the presidents as they take on domestic and diplomatic considerations in their decision-making, from their inauguration to the point of military contact with Iraq, and the differences that emerged. Like with the brief, casual conversations with Saddam Hussein in his prison cell in Baghdad, the purpose of this research is to interrogate the U.S. decision to go to war and the decision-makers who believed that war was necessary.

A guiding aim of this research is to illustrate a history of the origins of the decision, in 1991 and 2003, to go to war with Iraq. In order to articulate this history, the framing and explaining of American foreign policy is emphasised and elaborated through a method of qualitative analysis that focuses on a diplomatic and domestic considerations that influence U.S. foreign policy. This deliberate framing is utilised so that a narrative emerges that is able to explain why there was a decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. In conjunction with a history of the *domestic and diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq, this research will focus on the presidential character and decision-making of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush in relation to Iraq. A focus on the similarities between each administration and decision to go to war, alongside the differences, will be among the primary aims of this research, and will help establish the incongruities that exist within the American presidency, and the shared dilemma of presidential decision-making, especially in light of the relationship between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. Finally, as a result of this history, the research will contend that each decision to go to war with Iraq emerged differently from domestic and diplomatic considerations that compelled each president towards aggressive action, and were compounded by each president’s strengths and weaknesses.

In order to construct these research aims into a coherent analysis, there are several research questions that serve as a foundation for this research. The first question asks why the U.S. decided to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and, again, in 2003. This question presents
an opportunity to explore the president and their administration as they confronted a threat
they deemed imperative to U.S. national security. From this question emerge two others
that ask, respectively, what similarities and differences existed between the decisions to go
to war. These questions emphasise the twelve years between the two Iraq wars, and
illustrate the parallels in decision-making and fundamental differences between the two
administrations. The final question explores the considerations contributed to both decisions
to go to war with Iraq, and considers the political and historical continuity between both
decisions to go to war, and both administrations. These questions all help to establish why
the U.S. went to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

In order to satisfy the research aims, and explore the research questions, this research will
be comprised of the following structure. The research will begin with chapter one, a literature
review, that contextualises the research questions. From there, chapter two will present the
methodology and elaborate how this research differentiates itself from the existing historical
analysis. The research will progress through chapter’s three to six, illustrating and framing
the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.
Finally, in chapter seven, there will be a conclusion that draws on the research aims, and, in
light of the historical analysis, provides answers for the research questions.

As presented in chapter one, the literature review, there already exists a diverse cross
section of discourse that explores the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. The
literature, however, is split broadly into different historical frames that embrace their own
scopes and limitations. The first frame is an international history of the wars with Iraq. This
frame considers why the U.S. went to war with Iraq in relation to political and historical
trends that exist in an international context, with little emphasis placed on the domestic
concerns that were faced by the president. In contrast to this international history is a
regional history that focuses on the Persian Gulf and considers regional concerns that
influenced the decision to go to war with Iraq. The last frame is a focus on presidential
history that ranges from personal memoirs to journalist accounts that explore the domestic
influences on decision-making. The culmination of this literature review is found in the discourse that promotes a comparison between the George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush presidencies. This research aims to contribute to this literature by adding a sustained and equal comparison of the diplomatic and domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003, bridging the gap between international, regional, and presidential histories.

In chapter two it is demonstrated how this research will add to the literature is through a method of framing and explaining American foreign policy that emphasises the domestic and diplomatic considerations that contribute to presidential decision-making. This research defers to a long line of academic thought that has helped inform the interpretation of American foreign relations throughout the twentieth century. In order to illustrate the source material, this research defers to the criticisms of diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis in regards to the construction of diplomatic history and international relations. As a result, the methodology of this research constructs a framing of history that helps to promote methodological rigour and present an illuminating historical narrative. The resulting methodology explores the decision to go to war with Iraq, and the processes of presidential decision-making, by viewing the decision to go to war through domestic and diplomatic origins. The contention is that the decisions to go to war with Iraq emerge, to a differing degree, from these two origins, and by constructing each frame separately, the history is able to detail a set of circumstances and influences that deepen the understanding of why the U.S. went to war with Iraq.

The domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq are presented in chapters three through to six of this research. Chapters three and four are a breakdown of the George H. W. Bush administration into the domestic and diplomatic origins. In each frame, the timeline focuses on the inauguration of the president, and ends with the beginning of hostilities with Iraq. Chapters three and four emphasise George H. W. Bush as a president whose foreign policy experience inspired confidence among Americans, reinforcing his
predilection to conduct diplomacy away from the domestic gaze. Bush’s reluctance to engage foreign policy in front of a domestic audience extended into hesitation to engage in domestic politics that left him open to political attacks from his opposition that withered away his public support. The domestic and diplomatic origins of George H. W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq illustrate a Cold Warrior who sees, at a point in history when the international order was shifting, Iraq as a threat and assumes that Saddam Hussein’s capabilities as a leader are an indication of his intentions. The result is a war with Iraq in 1991, in an effort to curtail this threat.

In chapters five and six, however, the domestic and diplomatic origins of George W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq are explored, emphasising a very different president. As is shown by these chapters, the decision to go to war with Iraq is made in an entirely different context and is influenced by the terrorist attacks in September 2001, against the U.S. Illustrating Bush’s lack of foreign policy experience and disparate advisors, yet bolstered by his confidence in domestic politics, the decision to go to war with Iraq is seen to defer to the American people for approval and support. In 2003, Bush conflates Saddam Hussein’s intentions with his capabilities, and, as a consequence, launches a war against Iraq in order to curtail, once again, a threat to the U.S.

There are, however, parallels that emerge from the two presidential decisions that are emphasised by each chapter, just as there are differences that become increasingly evident. In chapter seven, the conclusion, it is contended that the decision to go to war with Iraq, in both 1991 and 2003, depended on different concerns and was approached in a manner that reflected the experiences and strengths of the president. However, on closer examination, it can be seen that both presidents were reacting to domestic or diplomatic events and drawing confidence from different considerations. Although this research is not as candid as the casual conversations Agent Piro was able to entertain with Saddam Hussein in between interrogation sessions at Baghdad Operations Center, it will add to the growing field of
history that hopes to elaborate and explain why the United States went to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.
Chapter One

Literature Review

“The cost of this war, in lives and treasure, for Americans and Iraqis, has been greater than we ever imagined. This story is still being written, and will be for many years to come. Sanctions and weapons inspections, prewar intelligence and diplomacy, troop levels and post-war planning – these are all important issues that historians will analyse for decades. But the fundamental question that we can ask and debate now is, Was removing Saddam from power the right decision? I continue to believe it was.”

The decisions to go to war with Iraq stretch across a decade, and across as many different analyses in the existing literature. However, in order to make more sense of the decisions to go to war this thesis brings these two decisions, two presidents, and two administrations closer together in order to compare each decision in the lead up to each war with Iraq. Therefore, the literature concerning the United States decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003 can be classified into four separate categories. Each offers a framework through which the U.S. relationship to the Persian Gulf, and related presidential decision-making, can be more fully explored. In the first category, there are researchers who observe the history of the U.S. relationship with Iraq, and the decision to militarily intervene in the Persian Gulf, through an international relations framework. This international history emphasises the superpower status of the U.S. after the Cold War, and endows the process of decision-making with the benefits and constraints of international power politics. These researchers contend that with the end of the Cold War a new era of international relations began and, by

focusing on Iraq, an evolving U.S. foreign policy can be witnessed as the international community moves away from the burdens of the Cold War, and toward a murky, unsure future that is seared by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This category stresses the global dimensions of decision-making, casting aside domestic constraints and judging George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush based on an international criteria. In the second category, a subset of the literature draws away from the U.S. and frames a regional history of the Persian Gulf. Specifically, this approach focuses on the decision-making of the Iraqi leadership regime as it experiences U.S. foreign policy. The discussions in this category add an understanding of regional history that emphasises Iraqi motivations, and stress the consequences of ambiguous policies. The third category focuses on the presidential history of both presidents in an effort to understand their motivations. The literature in this category is more diverse, including efforts by historians to sift through what primary documents are available to reconstruct accounts of decision-making, alongside undocumented journalist narratives and published memoirs from administration insiders. Despite the scattered accounts of each presidency, this category illustrates both presidents as key decision-makers, and emphasises the pressures, constraints, and influences that affect foreign policy. Unlike post-Cold War histories that search for political explanations for decision-making, or the Persian Gulf histories that emphasise the consequences of U.S. foreign policy, the third category constructs a diverse history whereby the president is judged by his motivations and actions. This leaves the final category, and where this research distinguishes itself from the literature. In this final category, George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush are compared. There is a consensus within the comparative literature that both presidencies are exceptional in a way that transcends a father and son relationship because of their confrontation with Saddam Hussein. By exploring the accounts of decision-making within both administrations,

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The term “International Community” can be defined, thanks to Glenda Sluga in *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, as a community that supports the “introduction of international laws enforcing cooperation and arbitration between states.” This definition has a long history, emerging from the gathering of French-based peace societies that met in 1902, in Toulouse. See Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 17.
the lingering consequences of U.S. foreign policy, and a paradigm shift that began with the end of the Cold War, this research will deviate from these categories of literature in order to determine the diplomatic and domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

**International History**

The international history that focuses on the U.S. and the Persian Gulf considers global, transnational, and international factors, and how they influence foreign policy. In an effort to characterise how the U.S. formulated, and acted out, foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War is Sarah Kreps in *Coalition of Convenience: United States Military Interventions after the Cold War.*\(^7\) Kreps explores the way in which the U.S. turned toward multilateralism when considering foreign policy options after the Cold War, and illuminates the degree to which the U.S. relied on multilateral approaches in response to acts of aggression. According to Kreps, because of the unipolar strength of the U.S. multilateralism was only an option, whereas unilateralism was a certainty. Focusing on the Gulf War, Kreps argues that George H. W. Bush resorted to the United Nations Security Council in 1991 not out of necessity, but because “A UN authorization became the way by which the United States could bring along the substantive contributions of [allies].”\(^8\) Kreps explains that this was important, as utilising multilateralism could substantially decrease the burden any international action placed on the U.S., and could integrate allies into a long-term solution. However, Bush’s efforts in 1991 contrasted with George W. Bush’s efforts at multilateralism in 2003. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. shifted from a reactive posture to a proactive posture when considering threats abroad, and Iraq presented itself as an immediate threat. Adhering to Kreps initial contention that multilateral

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\(^8\) Ibid. 63.
approaches were optional, Bush did initially seek to include the United Nations within the
U.S. plans to confront Iraq. Kreps explained that Bush’s expectation that the United Nations
be included was an “unintended consequence of the UN success in the Gulf War.”
However, despite U.S. efforts to include the United Nations, “the United States was merely
after a hands-off environment in which these actors did not stand in the way of the invasion.
The simple interest in permissiveness was derivative of the operational expectations: the
United States did not expect to need the resources of these regional actors as it had in 1991.
It just needed them not to interfere.” Kreps concludes that this unipolarity was not
inherently bad, explaining that “Unipolarity put the United States in a position of global
leadership to craft multilateral solutions that might not otherwise have been possible…Power
meant that the United States went multilaterally, not unilaterally because it could.” The
result of Kreps’ study is that with the increase in global power the U.S. is seen to be more
likely to consider multilateral options in order to offset its own responsibilities, in the process
admitting that there is an increasing role for diplomacy, but only under the leadership of the
U.S.

Keith Shimko adds to Kreps’ political explanation of U.S. power post-Cold War by examining
the influence of a coinciding revolution in military affairs. In *The Iraq Wars and America’s
Military Revolution*, Shimko explains that the Gulf War in 1991 saw the successful
implementation and application of new military technologies that irrevocably changed how
military power could be applied throughout the world. Focusing on Iraq, Shimko notes that as
of “the spring of 2009, the United States had been at war with or in Iraq for six of the
previous 19 years. Including its role in enforcing no-fly zones between the wars, the United
States has been militarily involved in Iraq continuously for almost two decades. By almost
any measure, including obviously the commitment of troops and resources, the United

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9 Ibid. 64.
10 Ibid. 148.
11 Ibid. 165.
States’ other military engagements during that period pale in comparison.”13 By utilising military affairs as a frame, Shimko explains that the decision to confront Iraq was made possible because of advances in military technology that promised efficient and victorious military campaigns. In 1991, this “revolution” in military efficiency meant that the ground invasion would only need one hundred hours to rout enemy forces and declare strategic victory, thanks to guided munitions that efficiently decimated Iraqi fortifications. The success of this campaign went on to influence decision-making in 2003, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld argued that the benchmark set in 1991 could be improved. Initially, Secretary Rumsfeld was vindicated as “with better technology but only half the troops that liberated Kuwait in 1991, American forces advanced rapidly and struck precisely with an unprecedented degree of situational awareness to eliminate the Baathist regime in short order.”14 Despite these successes, Shimko notes that the 2003 invasion of Iraq quickly changed into an occupation of Iraq that reversed the initial successes of the military revolution. In the absence of the perfect enemy, the U.S. found itself fighting an insurgency that echoed the defeat suffered in Vietnam. As a result, Shimko concludes, “ideally, American defense policy should be the product of a coherent strategic analysis. In reality, of course, political and institutional interests inevitably intrude.”15 The benefit of Shimko’s analysis to this research is that his discussion of defense policy establishes a connection between the decision to confront Iraq in 1991 and 2003. By following Shimko’s connection, this research is able to explore one element of the undergirding motivations that influenced George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush to confront Saddam Hussein.

A third approach to considering U.S. foreign policy post-Cold War is Alexander Thompson in *Channels of Power: The UN Security Council and U.S. Statecraft in Iraq*.16 Whereas Kreps focuses on power relations and Shimko on military affairs, Thompson considers what role

13 Ibid. 23.
14 Ibid. 159.
15 Ibid. 237.
international organisations play in U.S. foreign policy. Focusing on the United Nations Security Council for its ability to create binding resolutions for United Nations members, therefore embodying the closest to international authority, Thompson introduces the superpower of the U.S. into the strategic arrangement. Instead of isolating the U.S., and suggesting that the United Nations was a partner in multilateral commitments, Thompson argues that the organisation is seen as a necessary tool for helping engage U.S. foreign policy. Using Iraq as an example, Thompson argues that the “U.S. and allied leaders framed their coercion of Iraq in two important ways: (1) the conflict was portrayed as an issue of Iraq versus the world community, and (2) the coalition was said to be enforcing compliance with international rules. Explicit Security Council approval was obviously necessary to facilitate both of these framing strategies.”\(^\text{17}\) According to Thompson, the Security Council was a tool for the U.S. to confer legitimacy on its actions abroad, with the added benefit of reducing the political and economic costs. Thompson points out that:

First, as in the Gulf War case, working through the Security Council would demonstrate to the international community that the United States was willing to be constrained and to accommodate the interests of others. This would diminish the threat posed by the U.S. intervention in the region to the interests of various politically important governments. Second, and most important, the Bush administration was concerned with the reactions of domestic publics abroad...Security Council approval would signal to their publics that the coercive policy being pursued was designed to provide broad international benefits – beyond the narrow interests of the United States.\(^\text{18}\)

Therefore, according to Thompson, the Security Council plays a pivotal role in U.S. foreign policy post-Cold War. In both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush’s administrations, Thompson argues that domestic politics had little bearing on U.S. foreign policy, and it was instead foreign publics that were more concerning. Thompson’s conclusion is that “in the

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 73-74.  
\(^{18}\) Ibid. 161-62.
wake of Iraq, foreign policy idealists and realists now converge on a common prescription: the United States cannot succeed without including the UN and other multilateral institutions in its diplomatic and military quiver.¹⁹ That the United Nations Security Council has played an important role in international affairs post-Cold War cannot be denied, and it is true that the U.S. has been intimately involved in guaranteeing that the United Nations function as an important international institution. However, Thompson’s dismissal of American domestic politics and its influence over the president’s foreign policy decision making reduces the analytical scope. This research, agreeing with Thompson that the Security Council has an increased importance post-Cold War, goes on to contrast the decision making of each president as the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq are explored. Unlike Thompson’s study, this contrast shows that both presidents were concerned about what role the United Nations would take in U.S. foreign policy, and the end result was calculated with the U.S. domestic audience in mind.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between academics and policy-makers, Jeffrey Legro and Melvyn Leffler published an edited collection called In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11,²⁰ in which policy-makers and academics were brought together to discuss U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War. The volume includes contributions from academics such as John Mueller, who draws on a comparative exercise to illustrate the U.S. confronting threats to its national security after the Cold War, and Bruce Cumings, who constructs an interpretive inquiry that posits that reductivist conclusions relied on assumptions that led the repetition of mistakes after the Cold War. Alternatively, the volume has contributions from policy-makers such as Philip Zelikow, who writes a personal account of U.S. strategic planning in 2001-2002, and Paul Wolfowitz, who writes a similar account of Defense planning in 1992. The volume contributes substantially to the academic literature that surrounds U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War. In one review, the volume is

¹⁹ Ibid. 206.
regarded holistically as illustrating how scholars “completely fail to engage the policymakers on their own terms as individuals who in periods of uncertainty had to decide what the United States should do. Meanwhile, the policymakers for the most part are oblivious to the kinds of mistaken judgements that are so obvious to the academics, whose expertise decision-makers often ignore.”

This impression continues into the book launch, where Philip Zelikow criticises the “intellectual ivory tower,” and Paul Wolfowitz argues that historians lack the capacity to ask “what if” questions. Responding to criticism concerning the purpose of the volume, Melvyn Leffler argues, “we highlight the nearsighted vision, faulty assumptions, bureaucratic battles, and domestic priorities that plagued the policy process.” The additional benefit of the volume is that it illuminates “how key policymakers saw themselves tackling unprecedented challenges, our intent is to encourage scholars to assess such efforts with empathy, wisdom, and humility.”

For the most part, the mixture of contributors adequately illustrates the spread of analysis that surrounds U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War. The volume posits that “In Uncertain Times” defines how the U.S. set a course since the paradigmatic change that enveloped the international community when the Soviet Union began to recede, and eventually vanished. The volume denotes that in this period of change it was, separately, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 that prompt the greatest shifts in U.S. foreign policy. Therefore, this research finds it legitimate to focus on George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush as they were responsible for navigating U.S. foreign policy through the murk of international politics during both events. That both presidents confront the same threat in Saddam Hussein, and that both

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presidents were father and son, only adds to the curiosity of U.S. foreign policy in this period of uncertainty.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{Regional History}

Adding to the rising prominence of international histories is an avenue of analysis that aims to illustrate an Iraqi perspective of the U.S. This area of study is renewed after 2003, when the occupation of Baghdad meant a number of Iraqi documents were captured by the U.S. military, adding to accounts already published by Iraqi exiles describing Iraq and Saddam Hussein.\textsuperscript{25} Hal Brands is a leading proponent of studying the regional history of the Persian Gulf, and, in regards to Iraq, inserting Saddam Hussein as the focal point of the region. Brands contends in “Saddam Hussein, The United States, and the invasion of Iran: Was there a green light?” that the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war was the first instance where Saddam Hussein acted out against what he perceived to be American interests in the region. Contrary to the persistent belief that the U.S. provoked the war between the Iran and Iraq, Brands suggests that it was, in fact, because of Saddam Hussein, and argues that according to Iraqi perceptions of U.S. foreign policy “Saddam never trusted the United States enough to undertake an invasion on the basis of assurances of American support, and given his aim in taking on Iran, he did not believe that such support was forthcoming.”\textsuperscript{26}


\textsuperscript{25} A good example of exile literature that preceded the 1991 war with Iraq, and was republished before the 2003 invasion, is Kanan Makiya, \textit{Republic of Fear: The politics of Modern Iraq} (University of California Press, 1998). This book was originally published in 1989 under the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil. Another account of Iraq post-United States invasion in 2003 is Ali A. Allawi, \textit{The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace} (Yale University Press, 2007). Allawi returned to Iraq after the downfall of Saddam and this book is an account of the first steps of governing a post-Saddam Iraq.

was that Saddam Hussein would elicit support from both Moscow and Washington as Iran moved forward with its revolutionary government, and Iraq was seen as the natural counter to any Iranian regional ambitions. Brands stresses, “no green light was given by Washington, and none was perceived by Saddam.” However, this study shows that Saddam Hussein instigated the war against Iran because of what he perceived as the meddling of superpowers in the Persian Gulf that threatened his own regional power, adding a degree of agency to Saddam Hussein that counters the prevailing narrative that the U.S. is the primary antagonist in the Middle East.

In addition to Brands’ analysis is F. Gregory Cause III in “Iraq’s decision to go to War, 1980 and 1990.” Moving beyond the instigation of the Iraq-Iran war, he argues that Saddam Hussein exhibits the same degree of autonomy in decision-making in his decision to invade Kuwait in 1990. In both cases, Cause argues, Saddam Hussein “identified foreign sources of, or foreign support for, threats to his domestic hold on power…Saddam’s decision to invade was not to increase his popularity domestically, but rather to break up what he saw as a regional/international effort to weaken and destabilize him at home.” Cause brings forward Brands’ assertion that Saddam Hussein was pressured to invade Iran in 1980 because of his own paranoia, and adds to the decision to invade Kuwait in 1990 that “Iraqi ruling circles came to believe during 1989 that they had evidence that a number of foreign powers, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, were attempting to infiltrate Iraqi society to collect intelligence and pressure the government.” This sense of urgency that engulfed Saddam Hussein forced him to take action, and in both cases his only way forward was through military action in order to crush a perceived threat before it materialised. Cause concludes that Saddam Hussein invited external powers into the Persian Gulf because of his willingness to take advantage of instability, in order to consolidate domestic and regional

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29 Ibid. 49 [emphasis added].
30 Ibid. 56.
security. Cause explains, “it was Saddam’s perception that, because of his *domestic* problems, he could not wait to deal with the Iran issue.”31 This was repeated in 1990 against Kuwait. Hal Brands and David Palkki add to Cause’s argument in “Conspiring Bastards: Saddam Hussein’s Strategic view of the United States.” Brands and Palkki explain, “Saddam’s escalating apprehensions regarding the United States and its allies, and his belief that many of Iraq’s troubles could be traced back to Washington, were central to his strategic outlook in early 1990 and seem to have pushed him toward increasingly risky and aggressive behaviour.”32 According to Brands and Palkki, Saddam Hussein saw the first Gulf War as the continuation of a war against growing U.S. influence in the Persian Gulf that had begun in 1986, when it was discovered that the U.S. had secretly supplied munitions to Iran while they were at war with Iraq. For Saddam Hussein, this was the pivot in U.S.-Iraqi relations, as he became increasingly agitated by the U.S. presence in the region.33 The extent of perceived U.S. interference heightened Saddam Hussein’s paranoia, and eventually affected his decision making as “By the spring of 1990, Saddam was effectively caught in a feedback loop of suspicion and apprehension.”34 The invasion of Kuwait then came about as a result of Saddam Hussein’s misinterpretation of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. Brands and Palkki contend that “Saddam saw conflict with the United States as inevitable, that he viewed Washington and its allies as potentially mortal threats to Iraq, that after the Iran-Iraq war he believed this conspiracy would unfold sooner rather than later, and that he had identified Kuwait as a key player in U.S. designs.”35 Therefore, it made sense to Saddam that a quick strike against Kuwait would put Iraq at a strategic advantage to confront the geopolitical interests of the United States and its regional ally, Israel. Brands and Palkki conclude that “Saddam did not expect forbearance from a country he considered

31 Ibid. 70.
33 Ibid. 644-45.
34 Ibid. 651.
35 Ibid. 654.
an aggressive imperial power; he expected conflict.” These two studies highlight the ongoing, central role of Saddam Hussein in the crises that envelop the Persian Gulf. The centrality of Saddam Hussein in the region has a useful purpose for this research as it emphasises his lingering influence on U.S. foreign policy.

Taking advantage of documents that were captured by U.S. armed forces in the wake of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and held at the United States National Defense University’s Conflict Records Research Center, Lawrence Rubin elaborates Cause, Brands and Palkki’s arguments that Saddam Hussein had a history of lashing out against competitors in the Persian Gulf. Rubin explains that the prominent question arising before the 2003 invasion was whether Saddam Hussein posed a threat to the U.S. through his support for terrorism. Rubin’s preliminary findings suggest that it was plausible that Saddam Hussein might contribute to the needs of certain terrorists, however, the issue was complex. Rubin explains “while Saddam Hussein’s support of leftist groups due to shared pan-Arab revolutionary ideological goals may have played a significant role, it did not prevent him from trying to eliminate groups with similar ideological orientations. More to the point, Iraq’s support of radical groups such as the Egyptian al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya or the mujahideen al-Khalq (MeK) tells us that support was motivated by a shared strategic enemy.” Despite the lack of evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with al-Qaeda, Rubin notes, “The Hussein regime very cautiously cooperated with radical Islamic groups when the benefits outweighed the risks.” Rubin posits that decision-making, both from within the Persian Gulf and towards the Persian Gulf, was saturated in ignorance, and that it appeared “Decision-makers [drew] incorrect inferences about the reasons for its adversary’s actions and base[d] their policy on the inaccurate assumptions. Similarly, this adversary will make inferences based

36 Ibid. 657.
38 Ibid.
on its opponent’s behaviour, which was based on misperception.”

It was apparent that Saddam Hussein had miscalculated the U.S. will to confront Iraq at the slightest hint of adversity. On the other hand, Saddam Hussein was clearly basing his strategic decision making on insecurity. Rubin’s study, in conjunction with Brands, Palkki, and Cause, shows that Saddam Hussein’s actions were remarkably consistent throughout his reign as dictator, and that the 2003 invasion was the culmination of a longstanding confrontation between the U.S. and Iraq. In fact, from the perspective of regional history, Iraq is not an idle spectator dominated by expanding U.S. foreign policy, but is instead an active instigator of action within the Persian Gulf. This is important as it highlights Saddam Hussein’s central role in how the U.S. shaped its foreign policy toward the region.

Presidential History

The third category of the literature that helps frame the history of the U.S. confronting Iraq focuses specifically on presidential decision-making. In this case, the literature is split between publications that explore either George H. W. Bush or George W. Bush. The literature begins chronologically with George H. W. Bush. Philip Zelikow and Timothy Naftali, at the opening of the George H. W. Bush Oral History Archives at the Miller Center, part of the University of Virginia, in 2011, stress the important role of Bush in responding to crises that developed in the wake of the Cold War. Naftali was adamant that any history focused on international events at the end of the Cold War would have to consider Bush as an active participant, and Zelikow wondered if Bush was more than his moderate, pragmatic appearances. The Miller Center oral history project came one year after the journal,
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Diplomatic History, had published a collection of papers exploring the foreign policies of the Bush administration, presenting the multi-faceted nature of Bush as decision-maker. In conjunction with the published collection in Diplomatic History was a roundtable presented by the scholars at H-Diplo that reviewed the latest efforts to revisit Bush and the end of the Cold War. Historian Jeffery A. Engel notes that the renewed interest in Bush would assist emerging contemporary histories, explaining that “Future historians may well gain insights into the 2000s by the way we reconsidered a generation before.”

Turning to Bush, Engel notes his confidence, as he “responded time and again to events and crises fully confidant in his perception of the world and of the national security options shepherded to this desk by Scowcroft, without pausing to question the underlying tenets of his or his administration’s general worldview.” Engel stresses that there is a conflict evident in Bush as his cautious approach to change clashed with the momentous events cascading around the world, explaining that Bush “felt no real need to develop a new vision for the world after 1989 and even after 1991, because doing so would have entirely unmoored him from the Cold War world he inhabited, and quite frankly, enjoyed and embraced.”

This dichotomy in the presidency of George H. W. Bush, between a pragmatic realist and reluctant radical, was explored more fully by Engel in “A Better World…But Don’t Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of Bush Snr Twenty Years On.” Engel argues that the decision-making of Bush “is best understood as the culmination of a long-standing American vision,

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42 Ibid. 19.

43 Ibid. 20.

not as the progenitor of something radically new." As Bush had been tempered by the American political system under the mantle of the Cold War, having served in various capacities in the foreign policy and intelligence hierarchy of the U.S., Bush did not believe that the U.S. would have to prove its supremacy with the collapse of the Soviet Union because it was already implicitly acknowledged. More important, Bush’s reluctance to act out was because “Bush feared volatility most of all.” Engel uses this to frame the decision by Bush to confront Saddam Hussein after invading Kuwait. When put into context with the end of the Cold War, Engel insists that Bush believed “the president’s job to shepherd this new world through its period of change, to contain the violence and instability he could not control, and to impose structure and order whenever possible.” Therefore, Bush viewed the response to Iraqi aggression as an opportunity to show the world that the U.S. could prompt the international system into functioning as originally envisioned by the founders of the United Nations at the end of World War II. Confronting Saddam Hussein echoed Bush’s past experiences of “American-led international resolve and American-led leadership of an international coalition of democracies that had secured the great victories of Bush’s own youth and that had set the stage for the free world’s triumph over communism.” As a result, Bush is modelled as a pragmatic president who cautiously evaluated international politics and acted deliberately, so that the desired results were almost always achieved in the interest of the U.S. However, Bush’s successes in diplomacy, and management of his advisors, according to Engel, are marred by the controversial tenure of George W. Bush ten years later.

45 Ibid. 27.
46 Ibid. 32.
47 Ibid. 34.
48 Ibid. 35.
In contrast to Engel’s account of George H. W. Bush as a “shepherd” during a transitional point in international politics, Timothy Naftali provides more depth in a biography of Bush. Having curated the Richard Nixon presidential library, Naftali is well positioned to provide a nuanced account of the presidency.\textsuperscript{50} Like Engel, Naftali explained that Bush’s experiences in World War II, and in various foreign policy positions throughout the Cold War, had tempered his decision-making skills. However, instead of creating a reluctant leader, those experiences, argues Naftali, made for a deliberate leader. According to Naftali, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 presented the greatest challenge to the presidency of Bush and illustrated his leadership capabilities. Naftali focuses on the practicality of Bush’s decision making, explaining “Bush was not a conceptual thinker. He had a sense of appropriate goals and appropriate means of attaining those goals.”\textsuperscript{51} This meant that Bush at once understood that the U.S. could not tolerate the aggressive annexation of states under its new role as guarantor of international stability. Convinced of the need to repel Iraq from Kuwait and reinforce security in the Persian Gulf, because it was the right thing to do, Bush set about achieving that goal first through deliberations with his advisors, and then through deliberations with allies. As a result of Bush’s measured approach, the Iraqi occupation was reversed and the status quo was reasserted in the Persian Gulf. Bush’s confidence in his decision-making never wavered, and years after his failed bid to be re-elected in 1992 he met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Richard Cheney and Brent Scowcroft, who all agreed that they had managed the war against Iraq in 1991 appropriately. Bush did regret, however, his assumption that Saddam Hussein would fade away with time.\textsuperscript{52} But it was this success and longevity as a foreign policy leader that Naftali stresses. Under the weight of these accolades, it was presumed George W. Bush would have as much foreign policy success as his father. However, without George H. W. Bush’s foreign policy experience and


\textsuperscript{51} Timothy Naftali, \textit{George H. W. Bush}, 105.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. 172.
management credentials, the strong personalities of each advisor would clash under George W. Bush.  

John Mueller, in a contrasting account of George H. W. Bush as president, publishes a study in 1994 that illustrates Bush’s successes, or lack thereof, as a domestic leader. Agreeing with Naftali that the Gulf War was the focal point of Bush’s presidency in a leadership sense, Mueller collects an overwhelming amount of polling data in order to map the public opinion concerning Bush’s decision to go to war against Iraq in 1991. Mueller is insistent that Bush’s successful implementation of a war against Iraq was a remarkable success given that “his threats never sufficiently frightened Saddam Hussein, but they did alarm the American public.” Despite Bush’s skill as a foreign policy leader, his execution as a domestic policy leader was flawed. Attempting to justify why a military response might be required for reversing Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, “the problem as it developed for Bush was that the case became too good, that in a sense he was too effective at selling the war and at personalizing the issue: the public came to see the removal of Hussein from office as a central war aim.”

According to Mueller, Bush did not convince the American public to go to war:

Rather, he managed to lead the country to war because, as President, he was able to keep the issue brewing as an important one; because he could unilaterally commit the country to a path that dramatically increased a sense of fatalism about war and perhaps convinced many that there was no honourable alternative to war; because he could credibly promise a short, beneficial, and relatively painless war; because he and his top aides enjoyed a fair amount of trust in matters of foreign policy at the time; and because Saddam Hussein played the role of villain with such consummate skill.  

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53 Ibid. 171.  
55 Ibid. 54.  
56 Ibid. 58.
Although Bush successfully went to war against Iraq, he could not maintain his success at home, and Mueller is critical of Bush’s capacity as a domestic leader. Mueller concludes “to a considerable degree, it seems, his demise in the approval ratings can be attributed to his apparent inability to provide leadership on domestic issues; to his frantic, even panicky, arm-waving jolt from issue to issue; and to his inability to project the impression that he knew what was going on domestically, that he cared, and that he had a policy to do something about it.” It is Mueller’s contrarian account of Bush’s presidency that challenges the image of a confident, pragmatic leader that is evoked by diplomatic historians.

On the other hand, George W. Bush lacks the extent of primary documentation that is available to scholars researching George H. W. Bush, either through deliberate obfuscation or because the declassification process is still underway. Instead, the literature is mostly furnished with accounts of the controversial aftermath of various policies. Despite this, there is a strong foundation for a popular history of Bush’s presidency that rests on the undocumented accounts of journalists such as Bob Woodward, James Mann, Thomas Ricks, or Patrick Tyler. Complimenting these accounts are just as many memoirs published by members of the administration, including George Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney. This coincides with the edited collection In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11 that demonstrates a willingness to engage the foreign policy makers of Bush’s presidency in order to uncover the motivations of the president. As with the George H. W. Bush administration and the 1991 confrontation with Iraq, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is considered a prominent event of

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57 Ibid. 92.
58 These publications include Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack (Simon and Schuster, 2004); James Mann, Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet (Viking, 2004); Patrick Tyler, A World of Trouble: The White House and the Middle East (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009); Thomas E. Ricks, Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq (Penguin, 2007).
George W. Bush’s presidency. In an effort to highlight the interconnectedness of policy between the administrations, Frank P Harvey, in “President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Test of Conventional ‘W’isdom,” argues that the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 was the culmination of policy, rather than a unique decision constrained to Bush in 2003. Harvey contends that Democrat candidate Al Gore, who lost to Bush, would have followed a similar path toward war with Iraq because of what Harvey refers to as “Path Dependence.” This explains the “interlinkages and mutually reinforcing relationship between specific decisions in a rational sequence of choices moving forward. It was the momentum produced by the combined effects and pressures of all previous decision that led to the final, rational choice for war.”

More important, Harvey attempts to excise from the decision-making process the theory that “neoconservatives” hijacked Bush. Responding to criticism of Harvey’s publication that soon followed the article, he explained that his “arguments contradict very entrenched (and politically motivated) ‘memories’ of what transpired.”

Harvey’s insistence that Bush remains responsible for his decision-making, more than is suggested by theories of policy hijacking, is juxtaposed by Thomas Graham in Unending Crisis: National Security Policy after 9/11, where Graham states that several foreign policy disasters under Bush were solely because of the ideological hijacking of the United States presidency. Graham insists that an ideology of “neoconservatism” suffocates the policy making process and, as a result, “the effect of this witches’ brew of misguided ideas turned out to be deeply inimical to U.S. national security, to the prosperity of the United States, and to its place in the world. For generations, U.S. policy had been based on multiculturalism at home and multilateralism abroad. The Bush administration opposed and virtually wrecked


both."  

Graham is convinced that Bush was set on invading Iraq from the outset of his presidency, arguing that "the actual reasons for the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq appear to be some combination of demonstrating to the world that the United States cannot be trifled with, securing access to oil, and the neoconservative delusion of making Israel safe and establishing Iraq as a pro-U.S. satellite democracy." With these premeditated motivations "the administration agreed on the rationale of the alleged national security threat of Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction even though the principals had to know from the very beginning that the issue was not beyond question." This snapshot of the polarization within the literature that surrounds Bush and his execution of foreign policy will be found to coalesce, time and time again, around the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Terry H. Anderson, in *Bush’s Wars*, expands on George W. Bush’s role in the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003, and prior to that Afghanistan. By contextualising the invasion of Iraq within the war on terror that began in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Anderson does not adhere to the same premeditated calculations as Graham. In fact, Anderson is quite clear that the invasion of Iraq came about because of favourable political circumstances, and not necessarily premeditated motivations, adding that “just 72 days after the tragedy of September 11, at a time when the outcome in Afghanistan was not clear and bin Laden and his lieutenants were evading capture, [President Bush] instructed the pentagon to begin planning for a military operation against Iraq.” In order to cajole the public into supporting regime change in Iraq, Bush deliberately made Iraq a domestic

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63 Ibid. 107.
64 Ibid. 119.
65 Another example of the criticism emerging only after the 2003 invasion is Paul Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2, March/April 2006. Pillar, who was the CIA’s National Intelligence Office for the Near East and South Asia from 2000-2005, was critical of the distorted role intelligence played in justifying the 2003 Iraq war. Shifting blame from intelligence analysts, Pillar instead blames the administration for the misappropriation of intelligence reports. See also Paul R. Pillar, *Intelligence and U.S. Foreign Policy: Iraq, 9/11, and Misguided Reform* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2011).
campaign issue in the 2002-midterm Congressional elections, something George H. W. Bush had avoided. With momentum gathering behind George W. Bush to confront national security threats, Anderson notes that “Americans were eager for revenge against someone, anyone for 9/11; they believed their president, were overwhelmed by events, or were not paying attention. The administration’s rapid repetition of its talking points continually appeared on hyperventilating cable news networks that were competing with Internet sources for the public’s attention.”67 The resulting political atmosphere meant that Bush, and the United Kingdom’s Prime Minister Tony Blair, could successfully undertake military action against Iraq. However, Anderson’s analysis is criticised for beating a dead horse, as Andrew Bacevich, in his review for Bush’s Wars, wonders “rather than directing more kicks at Bush and his associates, historians would be better served at rousing dogs that have been too long allowed to slumber.”68 However, Anderson is quick to point out that the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was uniquely Bush’s, and argues that it would be difficult to imagine George H. W. Bush “rushing off to war in a nation in the Middle East that had nothing to do with that national tragedy. The author of that policy was Bush, Jr., egged on by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the neocons. There were many reasons for the war in Iraq – emotional fallout from 9/11, quick “victory” against the Taliban, neocon ideology and administrative groupthink, misperceptions of a future Iraq, WMDs, and of course oil.”69 For these reasons, George W. Bush is placed in a central decision-making position, resulting in Thompson’s analysis blaming Bush for the fallout of the war.

In an effort to match the contribution made by In Uncertain Times, Melvyn Leffler added a survey in Diplomatic History of the substantial amount of memoir material that has emerged

67 Ibid. 124.
from the George W. Bush administration.\textsuperscript{70} Leffler’s efforts present an historical overview of the Bush administration that is lacking in the broader accounts of Anderson or Harvey. Leffler’s article maintains focus on the motivations of each policy maker, especially Bush, spending a considerable time pondering the circumstances under which decisions were being made. Leffler argues that “No account of the Bush administration's foreign policies should underestimate the degree to which fear and anxiety, guilt and responsibility shaped the mentality and psychology undergirding the administration’s approach to the Global War on Terrorism.”\textsuperscript{71} Leffler is careful to place Bush at the centre of decision-making, explaining that the consensus of the memoirs suggests that it is Bush who is “carefully orchestrating the tempo of events, avoiding any comprehensive and systematic deliberation of the pros and cons, cleverly deflecting the views of skeptics, offering cues where he wanted to go, mobilizing public opinion, and cultivating his British ally.”\textsuperscript{72} Indeed, Leffler points out “none doubted that Bush was, in fact, the decision-maker. Bush invited Cheney to participate fully in all decision, and he clearly confided in him and respected his advice. But Bush did not always follow Cheney’s recommendations.”\textsuperscript{73} However, Leffler also admits that the lack of primary documentation emerging from the administration means that relying on the memoirs of those who were involved is the most reliable method to understanding the decision-making of Bush. Leffler explains, “what really happened and why will not be resolved until scholars have far more primary documents than they now have. Until then, we must make intelligent use of the memoirs, avoid quoting selectively from those which share our political dispositions, and ponder the challenges, complexities, and imponderables that engulfed officials making portentous decision in times of peril and uncertainty.”\textsuperscript{74} However, Leffler is willing to draw a conclusion from the material he researched. Leffler notes that:


\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. 24.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. 24-5.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid. 22.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. 26.
The memoirs emanating from the Bush administration in their collectivity do not vindicate. Rather, they explain the terror and horror of 9/11 and its aftermath. They convey a sense of the extraordinary conditions under which policy makers operated with limited knowledge and intense anxieties…The memoirs illuminate policy makers scrambling to do something to overcome the shock of 9/11, display American power, and satiate popular American demands for vengeance and “justice”.  

Despite Leffler’s research, the literature separates again to consider the domestic element of Bush’s leadership. Ole R. Holsti, in *American Public Opinion on the Iraq War*, replicated John Mueller’s earlier efforts in *Policy and Opinion on the Gulf War*, and collated the public opinion leading up to and beyond the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Holsti is quick to point out that the 1991 Gulf War, termed by Mueller as the “Mother of all polling events,” was replaced by the 2003 invasion in domestic importance. However, unlike Mueller’s study, Holsti engages in a highly polarised revisionist understanding of why the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. Noting heightened partisan differences, Holsti explains that “Those who believed that the United States had done the “right thing” in using force against Iraq – that is, a very strong majority of Republican respondents – were most likely to view events on the ground as pointing toward success, thereby sustaining and reinforcing their policy preferences on the issue. Conversely, far fewer Democrats support the war, and in light of that it is hardly surprising that they were more likely to assess events there, including the post-Saddam insurgency, in a much less optimistic light.” Holsti suggests that this partisan divergence took time to develop, and was only substantial well after the invasion had taken place. Following the polling data, Holsti argues that “there was a fairly close concordance between public opinion and Bush administration policies during the two years leading up to the fall of Baghdad, but it would be a mistake to conclude that, therefore, public opinion was an

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75 Ibid. 27.
77 Ibid. 92.
important driving force in Washington.” Holsti notes that public opinion would closely follow the public policy debates engaged by domestic leaders, and support was forthcoming when a bi-partisan consensus emerged. However, in consolidating this support, Bush encountered a similar issue experienced by George H. W. Bush in 1991. Holsti explains that the public soon grew disenchanted with the decision to invade Iraq when it became clear that the objectives that the public believed they were pursuing did not materialise. Holsti goes on, stating “events are ultimately the driving force behind public opinion, trumping vigorous public relations efforts to paint the war as an indispensable and winnable effort to protect the most vital national interests. That is especially the case when the administration faces a growing credibility gap.” As it became increasingly obvious that the U.S. had not secured Iraq; had not found Saddam Hussein’s hidden weapons of mass destruction; and was embroiled in an insurgency that was not planned for, the bi-partisan consensus snapped, and the public turned away from its support as pundits began searching for who to blame for the failure of the invasion. Holsti found, in the words of one analyst, “increasingly Democrats ‘forgot’ that they had supported the invasion following the fall of Baghdad, whereas Republicans ‘forgot’ that their support had been conditioned on accepting administration claims about Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction.” As a result, Holsti suggests that before the occupation of Iraq the public supported the invasion of Iraq, and, despite approaching confrontation with Iraq in two different ways, both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush enjoyed these conditions.

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78 Ibid. 139.
79 Ibid. 147-148.
80 Ibid. 158.
81 Holsti adds to his study of American public opinion in Ole R. Holsti, To See Ourselves as Others see us: How Publics Abroad View the United States After 9/11 (University of Michigan Press, 2008). Holsti argues that domestic politics are able to project and that “American policies that gain the support of both major political parties are likely to be perceived by others as more legitimate. Moreover, actions that are sustained by bipartisan support can reassure leaders and publics abroad of continuity in Washington’s policies” (212). The conclusion suggests that the president has an interest in maintaining domestic support for a foreign policy for diplomatic benefits.
Comparing George H. W. Bush to George W. Bush

The contribution of this research, however, is to compare the decision of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush to go to war with Iraq. As is clear by the literature, there exists a multitude of accounts of each administration’s decision-making that encompass international relations theory, through to presidential biographies. However, few of these accounts sustain a direct comparison of the presidents in order to reflect on the similarities and differences in decision-making. In the lead up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, observers began alluding to the influence of the 1991 Gulf War. Richard K. Betts, in an article published in *Foreign Affairs* in early 2003, argues that unlike 1991, there was the risk that any war fought against Iraq would not be on American terms. The possibility of a strike by Iraq against the U.S. with weapons of mass destruction, no matter how miniscule, meant that deterrence was the suitable approach to containing Saddam Hussein. Betts argues that American leaders during the 1991 Gulf War issued “a deterrent threat, warning Saddam against using biological or chemical weapons.” As a result, despite a humiliating defeat, Saddam Hussein “held back his high cards in 1991 because he was never forced to the wall or confronted with his own demise. That war, unlike the one now contemplated, was limited.” Bett’s suggests that the difference between the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion, at the onset, was that George W. Bush lacked a grasp of the potential consequences of a war that appeared unlimited and inevitable. However, Kenneth Pollack had already beaten Betts to the mark by publishing *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* in late 2002. Pollack, who had worked as an analyst on Iraq for the CIA and National Security Council, wrote a long account justifying a military intervention to depose Saddam Hussein. Pollack’s argument was simple – “at the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the international community undertook a commitment to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the other nations of the Middle East. This commitment

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83 Ibid. 39-40.
was to prevent Saddam Hussein from ever threatening them as he had in the past."\(^{84}\)

However, the solution in 1991 to establish sanctions and a regime for disarming Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction had, according to Pollack, failed, and “The United States made a good-faith effort to try to handle the problem of Saddam Hussein and his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction through multilateral containment.”\(^{85}\) Therefore, as a direct consequence of the decisions made during the 1991 Gulf War, Pollack concludes that “because we are the world’s only remaining superpower and the only country with the capability to prevent Saddam from again threatening the region and its oil supplies, we are the ones who will have to clean up the mess we tried to prevent others from making.”\(^{86}\)

Pollack gained further credibility when he was cited in Congress as evidence for supporting military intervention in Iraq in the lead up to the 2003 invasion.

Andrew Bacevich, however, offered a different understanding of the initial decision to confront Saddam Hussein in 1991, and in contrast to the repetition in 2003. In *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, Bacevich stresses that there was a desire to establish a U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf as the world opened up in the wake of the Cold War. It is because of economic priorities that the decision to intervene in the Persian Gulf is initially made, as “on the surface [globalisation] promised a new economic order that would benefit all. Beneath the surface it implied a reconfiguring of the international political order as well.”\(^{87}\) According to Bacevich, the U.S. was motivated to keep Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq as it justified the presence of a significant U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf, under the auspices of guaranteeing Persian Gulf security.

Therefore, the priorities for the United States were best explained by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright - “Military power was not to be unleashed; it was doled out in precisely measured increments. The use of force against carefully selected targets – preferably


\(^{85}\) Ibid. 413.

\(^{86}\) Ibid.

inanimate objects – precluded the prospect of slaughter."\textsuperscript{88} This omnipresence ensured that the U.S. remained on top of the international order, and guaranteed U.S. power over international politics. As a result of the political perception of military power that had begun with the 1991 Gulf War, Bacevich concludes, “the war that began on September 11, 2001, was a war to preserve and to advance the strategy of openness. Indeed, if anything, al Qaeda’s attack on the American homeland eased constraints that during the previous decade had inhibited U.S. officials in their pursuit of greater openness (and expanded American hegemony)."\textsuperscript{89} Therefore, in the wake of compounding political momentum, Bush’s decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was seen as a suitable and necessary response to reassert U.S. global power.

There are accounts, however, that more directly compare the presidencies of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush.\textsuperscript{90} Richard N. Haass, in \textit{War of necessity, War of Choice: A memoir of Two Iraq Wars}, presents a compelling account of working within the decision-making structure of both presidencies. Under George H. W. Bush, Haass was a member of the National Security Council, and was intimately involved in the discussions leading up to the confrontation with Iraq in 1991. Under George W. Bush, Haass secured the role of Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, working under the leadership of Secretary of State Colin Powell. Haass, much like Zelikow in \textit{In Uncertain Times}, stresses the context for decision making, and criticises many of the accounts that precede his own, explaining that “Not surprisingly, historians and academics who have never experienced government and its pressures tend to overlook or discount physical strain as an influence on those making policy."\textsuperscript{91} Haass remarks that George H. W. Bush’s administration, in comparison with the four other administrations he had worked under, appeared the most

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. 48-9.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. 227.
\textsuperscript{91} Richard Haass, \textit{War of necessity, War of Choice: A memoir of two Iraq wars} (Simon and Schuster, 2009)
functional. Haass notes that Bush genuinely believed in an “international community” that would emerge from the Cold War, and his decision to confront Iraq would embody that belief. As a consequence, Haass discounts the importance of the 1991 Gulf War, arguing, “The first Iraq war constituted an important moment in world history, not a transformation.”

This contrasts with George W. Bush’s administration. Haass immediately noticed that the decision-making process included more than just the president’s voice, and added, “the fact that the Vice President’s office and the secretary of defense had a seat at the table equal to the secretary of state’s also increased the odds that diplomacy would be hobbled.” Under Bush, it appeared as though advice would be filtered, or outright ignored, because of a one-sided debate that had emerged from a consolidated block of authority that included the vice president, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Advisor, but not the State department. As a result of this insular decision-making process, Haass argues that unlike the 1991 Gulf War, Bush wanted to transform Iraq and the Middle East in order to accomplish what it was believed George H. W. Bush had failed to achieve in 1991.

However, the research that focuses specifically on a comparison of the decisions of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush to confront Iraq, and closely mirrors the contention of this research, is Michael F. Cairo in *The Gulf: The Bush Presidencies and the Middle East*. Cairo argues “personal beliefs and character in the presidency matter in the determination of foreign policy. The way both Bush administrations responded to the global changes taking place was a result of how each President Bush, and a small number of his advisers, defined those events.” Therefore, Cairo situates the decision to confront Iraq as part of each president’s worldviews, explaining, “While the older Bush emphasized defensive realism and neoliberal institutionalism, the younger stressed the offensive variant of realism and the

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92 Ibid. 133.
93 Ibid. 207.
94 Ibid. 235.
These differing worldviews fundamentally changed the approach each president took toward international crisis, as George H. W. Bush was seen to act more diplomatically and flexibly, whereas George W. Bush was a crusader. Again, the confrontation with Iraq is used as evidence of the differing worldviews affecting policy choices, as Cairo points out that “George H. W. feared squandering American power and acted only after the crisis had emerged…on the other hand, George W. ‘hit the ground running,’ with a plan in mind; from the beginning of his administration, he intended to use American power to foster and advance American interests and ideals.” The juxtaposition of the two presidencies allows Cairo to conclude that there are two descriptions that can be applied to each president. Because of George H. W. Bush’s measured, prudent approach he is an “enlightened realist,” as evidenced by Bush’s preference for defensive realist options for foreign policy. George W. Bush, however, is labelled a “cowboy liberal” for his gut-instinct and good-intentioned approach to foreign policy, and the preference for offensive realism when considering foreign policy.

Where this thesis separates itself from Cairo’s comparison is by how much this worldview of the president can be used to explain decision-making. Although there is no denying that this is a valid observation that contributes to presidential decision-making, it is apparent that there are other concerns that interplay whenever a decision is to be made. By utilising each

96 Ibid. 9.
97 Ibid. 84.
98 Another account of the compulsions that lead to presidential decisions is J. Patrick Dobel, “Prudence and Presidential Ethics: The Decision on Iraq of the Two Presidents Bush,” Presidential Studies Quarterly, 4, No. 1 (2010). Dobel focuses on the important of political prudence to the success and failure of policy decisions, using the decisions of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush to go to war with Iraq as a case study. Dobel concludes that embracing political prudence meant clarity of political realities that determined policy success. George H. W. Bush exemplified prudence and made the decision to go to war with Iraq by stating a clear, geopolitical stance on the Iraqi-Kuwait invasion. George W. Bush, on the other hand, erred on the side of prudence and failed to clearly rationalise the decision to go to war with Iraq, whether that was to fight terrorism, depose Saddam Hussein, disarm Iraq of Weapons of Mass Destruction, or spread democracy in the Middle East. Just like Cairo relies on the personalities of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush in order to answer why the U.S. went to war with Iraq, Dobel, instead, argues that it was the presence of “prudence” in presidential decision-making.
category of literature, this research will be situated in the following way and deviate from the established literature. The international history of the wars in Iraq acknowledges that there is a context to decision-making that exists beyond the shores of the U.S. As a result, there are diplomatic origins that exist and influence the decision to go to war with Iraq. The regional history of the Gulf Wars supports this contention, highlighting that events occur irrespective of domestic motivations in the United States. The presidential history of the Gulf Wars, however, emphasises the opposite of the international history, and shows that there is a separate domestic origin for the decision to go to war. Drawing these categories together, this thesis will compare and contrast the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. In order to further frame, and emphasise, the different origins, the research will focus separately on both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, drawing together a comparison in the conclusion that highlights the similarities, and differences, of both president’s decision-making towards the Persian Gulf.
Chapter Two

Methodology

“I have long held that all relevant motives should be carefully weighed, and that no one should be beaten to death or found where it did not exist.”99

This research is considered a work of diplomatic history and relies on a qualitative analysis of source material derived from database, archival, and secondary publications, in order to explore why the United States went to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. As a result of this analysis, the decision to go to war will be contrasted in such a way as to emphasise the foreign policy making of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. This process frames and presents an account of the decisions to go to war that allows for a comparative historical analysis. This methodology is influenced by the approach of diplomatic historians, and draws some inspiration from the conceptual frameworks of political science. As will be described, two different, albeit corresponding, historical frames that emphasise the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war will be used to illustrate the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. Therefore, this methodology consists of two parts. First, there will be a survey of literature that shows political scientists and diplomatic historians intersecting in their efforts to establish a foundation for the interpretation and illustration of American foreign policy. From here there are two key points that relate to the methodology of this research. Initially, there is the importance of a framework when addressing historical questions and, following this, a framework is presented that portrays a history of American

foreign policy that is relevant to the decision to go to war with Iraq. What emerges from this discussion, and from the nexus of political scientists and diplomatic historians, is a framework that can be applied to this research, and helps establish a history of the U.S. going to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. The second part of this methodology is how this research employs a method of qualitative analysis that frames the source material. This consists of exploring two separate origins of the decision to go to war against Iraq, the *domestic* and the *diplomatic*. Each resulting frame, utilising a different approach to the question of why the U.S. went to war against Iraq in 1991 and 2003, creates a history that explores the similarities, differences, and concerns that influenced George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush when they decided to go to war with Iraq.

**Framing American Foreign Relations**

There are many efforts, by both political scientists and diplomatic historians, to approach and conceptualise foreign relations, so that it might make sense. There are many proponents of both academic schools who agree to disagree about the merits of each school of thought. In fact, political scientist, and, arguably, historian, Hans J. Morgenthau contended in *Scientific Man vs Power Politics* that he considered the reduction of politics and history to scientific formulae a useless task. Morgenthau rallied against idealists, and explained:

> The age is forever searching for the philosopher’s stone, the magic formula, which, mechanically applied, will produce the desired result and thus substitute for the uncertainties and risks of political action the certitude of rational calculation. Since, however, what the seekers after the magic formula want is simple, rational, mechanical, and what they have to deal with is complicated, irrational, incalculable, they are compelled, in order to present at least the semblance of scientific solutions, to simplify
the reality of international politics and to develop what one might call the ‘method of single cause’.100

Morgenthau prefers the approach of a diplomatic historian when reconciling his thoughts on international politics, arguing, “The professionalism of the historian flows from the competence with which he handles the factual material and the conclusiveness with which he marshalls it in support of his position. His aim, by which his efforts much be judged, is the coherent reconstruction of the past, which illuminates the past, the present, and the human condition, regardless of time and place.”101 It is, therefore, necessary for this research to establish a framing of American foreign relations that illuminates the history of American foreign policy.

Forty years after Morgenthau lambasted political science in Scientific Man vs Power Politics, diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis resumed the debate in an article published in International Security, arguing that despite Morgenthau’s complaints, there is some merit to political science exploring American foreign relations. Gaddis argues that there is a misunderstanding between political scientists and diplomatic historians that could be construed as speaking different languages. Breaking down the complaints and accusations levelled at both schools of thought, Gaddis begins with political scientists, explaining that they presume to anticipate international politics and produce prescriptive solutions, needlessly limiting the scope and application of their research.102 Gaddis lists three reasons why political science is a limited frame for foreign relations:

First, too much was promised. The idea that scientific certainties could be located in the field of politics in much the same way as in the physical sciences was a questionable one from the start…Second, the scientific approach to politics became preoccupied, to

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100 Hans J. Morgenthau, Scientific Man vs Power Politics (The University of Chicago Press, 1946) p 95.
the point of paralysis, with debates over methodology. As much time was devoted to
developing definitions of terms, procedures for coding, and techniques for measuring as
was spent on actually attempting to derive new insights about the field…Third, the data
bases that were constructed confined themselves almost entirely to the *public*
manifestations of international relations, which often amounted to whatever appeared in
the pages of *The New York Times*.\(^{103}\)

At its core, the issues faced by political science framing foreign relations are that it confuses
“technique with substance,” and focuses “so heavily upon the *way* in which international
relations are conducted that one loses sight of the *issues* those relations address in the first
place.”\(^{104}\) On the other hand, the diplomatic historian produces a remarkably different frame
for the conduct foreign relations, and Gaddis is equally critical about the conduct of
diplomatic history. Gaddis explains that in some circumstances historians succumb to the
“antiquarian fallacy” that “assumes that history, by definition, concerns itself only with what
has already happened and has nothing whatever to do with the present.”\(^{105}\) According to
Gaddis, this means that “the history most relevant to contemporary concerns is often
considered not to be history at all, but rather some slippery and not well understood variety
of current events, best left to journalists.”\(^{106}\) Gaddis adds to his criticism, first, that there is a
trend among historians to be afflicted by “presentism,” a narrow scope in which the historian
assembles history in order to explain current events. Second, the historian proves reluctant
to address methodology. And third, they ignore comparative elements within history that
might identify relationships, because of the “monographic” fallacy that history must produce
standalone work.\(^{107}\) Although critical, Gaddis does contend that there is a way to reconcile
the best parts of political science and diplomatic history when framing foreign policy.

According to Gaddis, there is a way to consider both “sequence and system,” and avoid

\(^{103}\) Ibid. 7-8.
\(^{104}\) Ibid. 8.
\(^{106}\) Ibid. 11.
\(^{107}\) Ibid. 10-14.
“falling into the traps of antiquarianism, presentism, and conceptual poverty that have afflicted historians, or the pitfalls of scientific hubris, methodological constipation, and linguistic incomprehension that have encumbered the political scientists.”

Therefore, this research seeks to establish a framing of American foreign policy that avoids the criticism that Gaddis levels at the field of contemporary history.

To that end, it is necessary to establish what constitutes American foreign policy, and how it is formed in relation to this research. A traditional understanding of foreign policy, and one that might adhere stringently to the constraints of either political science or diplomatic history, is that foreign policy operates in the space of international politics, and is unmoored from domestic concerns. However, this understanding has evolved along with the technology that has increasingly integrated the global into the local. In regards to American foreign policy, it can be seen that domestic pressure has become increasingly present in the formation and practice of foreign policy, either through the spectacle of protests that are broadcast live throughout the media, or the interviews and media liaisons that proceed a major policy announcement. As a sign for the times, President Barack Obama has a fulltime photographer employed solely to document his daily schedule. It takes seconds after those photos are taken for them to appear on the internet, and visible around the world. However, these two contexts, the diplomatic and domestic, constitute very different frames for foreign policy. According to Robert J. McMahon, this is the “Janus-face” of American relations. There is both a national history and an international history that has to be considered in

108 Gaddis, “Expanding the Database: Historians, Politic Scientists, and the Enrichment of Security Studies”, 21. Gaddis also wrote published criticisms in Diplomatic History. First, Gaddis urged caution against the “reductionist” tendencies to “synthesise” history down to single cause explanations, a trend that emerged in revisionist histories that avoided the realist arguments of political complexity and attempted to supply “single cause” explanations for international affairs. Second, Gaddis argued that diplomatic history was guilty of a lack in methodological consistency that allowed explanations to be applied indiscriminately, most evident in the assumption that international politics flowed outward from the United States. And third, diplomatic history had to avoid “cultural and temporal parochialism” that insisted the experience of the United States is unique and exceptional to the detriment of any other nation. John Lewis Gaddis, “New Conceptual Approaches to the Study of American Foreign Relations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,” Diplomatic History, Vol. 14, Is. 3 (1990): 405-423.
order to depict a whole picture of American foreign policy. This framing of American foreign policy generates questions that deepen any historical analysis, asking “How have elites attained, maintained, and exercised power? What have been the internal, or systemic, sources of the nation’s external behaviour? To what end have public or private elites interacted? What difference has the United States made in and to the wider global community?” Without considering these questions, went on McMahon, any diplomatic history of the United States would be incomplete.

On the other hand, Melvin Small is more concerned with a quantifiable breakdown of American foreign policy, arguing that there were several ‘publics’ within the U.S. that constitute the formation of foreign policy. Small explains:

> At the top of the apex of a pyramid that might represent all citizens are the opinion makers, a very small coterie of government officials, respected national leaders and celebrities, editors, and journalists. Below them is the group called the attentive public

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109 Robert J. McMahon, “Towards a Pluralist Vision: The Study of American Foreign Relations as International History and National History,” in ed. Michael J. Hogan, Thomas G. Paterson, *Explaining American Foreign Relations*, Second Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 37. Diplomatic historian Thomas Schwartz explored the potential of domestic politics effecting American foreign policy in a piece published in *Diplomatic History* called “Henry,…Winning an election is terribly important”: Partisan Politics in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations.” Although Schwartz focused on Presidents Richard Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson, he stressed that the premise of the article was “that domestic partisan politics, the struggle for power at home, has played, and no doubt continues to play, a substantial role in the making and direction of American foreign policy” (173). To this end, Schwartz stressed that in much the same way a realist understanding of international politics stressed the selfishness of national interests and the pursuit of power, domestic politics in the United States was made up of the selfishness of American politicians and their pursuit of domestic power. After all, it is from the fountain of domestic approval that a Presidential candidate finds the support that awards them the presidency. However, Schwartz also stressed that domestic politics should not be viewed as a negative influence on American foreign policy. Schwartz argued that “In recognizing the significance of electoral politics in the history of U.S. foreign relations, one recognizes a complex and developing story, with the same mixture of idealism and realism, internationalism and parochialism, generosity and selfishness that make up the American people.” p 190. Thomas Alan Schwartz, “Henry,… Winning an Election is Terribly Important”: Partisan Politics in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, Is. 2 (2009). See also, Ralph B. Levering, “Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, and American Politics since the 1960s,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 13, Is. 3 (1989): 383-393.

that might be as large as 25 percent on some issues. These well-educated and well-read people tend to pay attention to international politics and influence others around them. Finally, more than 75 percent of the population makes up the mass public that usually does not care much about foreign affairs until the United States is in a crisis.\footnote{Melvin Small, “Public Opinion,” in ed. Michael J. Hogan, Thomas G. Paterson, \textit{Explaining American Foreign Relations}, (1st edition, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 166-67. Small expands his argument in Melvin Small, \textit{Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789 – 1994} (The John Hopkins University Press, 1996) where he drafts a history of the influence of domestic politics on American foreign relations. Small contends that the American political system intimately affected the formulation of foreign policy, especially in comparison to autocratic states. The whims of a voting public, the meddling of Congressional members and an open media could all influence the foreign policy making of the president. Democratic pressure on decision-making, according to Small, increased throughout the 1960s when the United States was finally breached by the international world by the scare of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Looking at contemporary history, Small adds that with the end of the Cold War “popular analyses of international problems have become less concerned with strategic realities than with moral and humanitarian issues. For example, both the Bush and Clinton administration found it easier to send troops to Somalia, an area of marginal national security significance, than to the former Yugoslavia, a potential tinderbox for a broader European war, when American responded emotionally to starving Somalian children staring out at them from their television sets.” p 170. This is an example of the pressure that emerges from domestic politics on foreign policymaking.}

The purpose of breaking down the ‘public’ into constituent parts is Small’s way of acknowledging that there is a hierarchy present in the development of foreign policy. More importantly, a domestic framing of diplomatic history helps add to any analysis that fixates on the diplomatic dimensions of foreign policy.

The bridge between the domestic and diplomatic is explained by Melvyn Leffler, who stresses that national security is the common denominator in the formation of foreign policy. Leffler writes that “National security policy encompasses the decision and actions deemed imperative to protect domestic core values from external threats. This definition is important because it underscores the relation of the international environment to the internal situation in the United States and accentuates the importance of people’s ideas and perceptions in constructing the nature of external dangers as well as the meaning of national identity and
vital interests.”¹¹² For the observer of foreign policy, who might be attempting to frame foreign policy, Leffler provides a key to understanding what constitutes a nation's core values. With these core values, the historian is then able to develop a domestic frame that emphasises an internal context that imposes itself on foreign policy from the inside, while the diplomatic frame creates an external projection of those core values.

The purpose of deconstructing the framing of foreign policy is to explore the history of the U.S. going to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. Diplomatic historians have tussled to some extent after the Cold War to frame a contemporary history that might help explain the conduct of the U.S. after 1989.¹¹³ Historian Andrew Bacevich has been a leading proponent of the effort to engage contemporary American diplomatic history. In an article published in *Military History*, Bacevich complains that the framing of American foreign relations is in need of revision. Bacevich explains that “for history to serve more than an ornamental function, it must speak to the present.”¹¹⁴ Using an example of useful historical framing, Bacevich contends that there are two histories’ that emerge from the end of World War II. The first, a short history, sees the U.S. overcome Nazi Germany and embroil itself in an apocalyptic struggle with the Soviet Union, until finally the U.S. succeed in beating Communism and standing unopposed as the world’s sole superpower. In the second history, the long history, events are understood sequentially and separately, and are remembered differently depending on perspective. If one were to draw contemporary lessons from these two histories, the first would expound the virtues and success of the U.S., and the second would


¹¹³ The diplomatic conduct of the U.S. was a point of contention among diplomatic historians throughout the Cold War, and by no means is the debate unique to contemporary circumstances. However, the post-Cold War period has brought with it a renewed passion within the debate as the international role of the U.S. has twisted and turned in response to international events. For a good overview of previous debates within diplomatic history see Joseph Siracusa, *New Left Diplomatic Histories and Historians: The American Revisionists*, (Updated Edition, Regina Books, 1993).

warn of the reality of those virtues and success. Bacevich points out that “for those with a
taste for irony try this one: 1991 was the year in which the U.S.S.R. finally gave up the ghost;
it was also the year of the First Persian Gulf War. One headache went away; another was
about to become a migraine.”\textsuperscript{115} Central to Bacevich’s reframing of diplomatic history are the
decisions that leaders make and how they are informed. Bacevich concludes that “the First
Persian Gulf War deserves to be remembered chiefly as a source of wildly inflated and
pernicious illusions. More than any other event, this brief conflict persuaded Washington,
now freed of constraints imposed by the Cold War, that the application of U.S. military power
held the key to reordering the Greater Middle East in ways likely to serve American
interests.”\textsuperscript{116} Although a history of American foreign policy has to be mindful of its framing
constraints, the useable aspect of the history is found in examining how leaders decided on
a course of action. Therefore, this research defers back to the decision-making of George H.
W. Bush and George W. Bush when exploring the \textit{domestic} and \textit{diplomatic} origins of the
decision to go to war with Iraq. The importance of this history cannot be understated, and
Bacevich stresses that the role of the historian is to provide their future students “with a
useable past, preparing them as best we can to meet events as they unfold.”\textsuperscript{117} It is
imperative that this research expresses a clear historical framing of the U.S. decision to go
to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003, so that its history can be made ‘useable.’

\textbf{The Domestic and Diplomatic Origins of the Decision to Go to War with Iraq}

This research, utilising the framing of foreign relations that can be divined from diplomatic
history and political science, will frame and explain the history of the U.S. going to war with
Iraq in 1991 and 2003, and explore the similarities and differences exhibited by George H.
W. Bush and George W. Bush in their foreign policy making. In order to do this, this research
\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{115} Bacevich, “The Revisionist Imperative: Rethinking Twentieth Century Wars,” 339.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{116} Ibid. 340.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{117} Ibid. 342.
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will employ a qualitative analytical approach to source material found in archives, databases, and secondary publications. This source material will be framed in two ways that encompass, and emphasize, different aspects of the decision to go to war. These different aspects, which are designated as five separate headings within each chapter, denote points in the analysis where a theme converged in the frame that influenced the decision making of the president. First, there are the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq that is seen in chapters three and five. In this frame, the analysis considers the internal dimensions of decision making and foreign policy-making. The second frame focuses on the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war that incorporate the external dimensions of foreign policy making, and is explored in chapters four and six. As a result of these two frames, a domestic perspective to the conduct of American foreign policy can be constructed and juxtaposed with the diplomatic perspective.

The first frame utilised in chapters three and five is the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. This research contends that there are domestic origins that can be shown, and are indeed evident, in the conduct of American foreign policy. The source material that constitutes this frame is found in the public papers of both presidents and through their public addresses, conferences, and interviews that involve the Persian Gulf, Saddam Hussein, or Iraq. The American Presidency Project at the University of Santa Barbara has a searchable database that assisted in indexing and collecting the public papers of both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. These public presentations of foreign policy create the domestic façade of the decision to confront Iraq, and are complimented by documents found at the National Security Archive at the George Washington University. Additionally, the Library of Congress provided a database that assisted in the collection of source material related to the domestic frame. However, in order to truly develop a domestic understanding of the decision to confront Iraq, the source material encompasses the discourse that is found in media publications, specifically newspaper commentary, op-eds, and editorials that critique and reflect a position on the administration's policy-making. These
publications, which are the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times*, are often the chosen platforms for policy-makers, politicians, and diplomats to argue their case, or for other interested parties to attempt to influence a larger audience.\(^{118}\) This source material was collected through the Proquest Central Database, and was focused on mentions of “Saddam” or “Iraq” within the timelines of January 1, 1989 to January 17, 1991, and January 1, 2001 to March 18, 2003. In these publications we see editorial positions, biased commentary, policy-makers writing op-eds, and former decision-makers, policy-makers, or experts all responding and arguing about the public presentations of policy. The resulting frame shows the domestic pressures that are exerted on the president as the administration seeks to reconcile competing interests in the pursuit of foreign policy. Ultimately, this frame shows the *domestic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. In order to add depth to this frame, memoirs, interviews, and publications from former administration members are also incorporated into the analysis, in order to add to the compulsions and perspective of the president who decided to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

The second frame, chapters four and six, encompasses the *diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. In contrast to the first frame, which looks inward, this frame focuses outward. This frame is more familiar to traditional diplomatic history, and the source material derives from, to a great extent, the dialogue between embassy outposts and the State Department, and U.S. conduct in the United Nations Security Council. In much the same way that the public discourse orchestrated by the president, and dissected by the media, constitutes a domestic frame of American foreign policy, the discourse between diplomats and the conduct of states in the United Nations constitutes the *diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war. Once again, the National Security Archive at the George Washington

\(^{118}\) Although Gaddis, in his criticism of political scientists, complains that political science often relies too much on public manifestations of American foreign policy in order to derive prescriptive answers, there is merit in exploring a public façade of foreign policy making. But, this merit can only be derived from public manifestations of American foreign policy when they are utilised in conjunction with archival source material, as this research method proposes.
University was a resource for declassified primary resources regarding both presidencies. However, the George H. W. Bush Presidential Archives in College Station, Texas, proved valuable for accessing additional primary documentation. The George W. Bush Presidential Library and Archives, on the other hand, has only recently been opened and the archives remain inaccessible to historians. For source material from the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council provides a database of documents that is searchable, and this was utilised across the same timeline as the domestic frame to collect primary source material that involved “Saddam” or “Iraq” in United Nations Security Council meetings. In addition, memoirs and interviews of important international civil servants, particularly the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission, are utilised throughout the frame to illustrate the depth of U.S. diplomatic conduct. The result of the diplomatic frame is to show the president’s efforts to apply foreign policy that benefits U.S. national interests, despite in some cases contrary pressure exerted by the domestic frame. By replicating these frames over similar timelines for both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, a comparative history can then be used to contrast the similarities and differences between the decisions to go to war with Iraq.

Central to both decisions is the president, and each timeline will begin with the presidential inauguration, continuing until the U.S. goes to war with Iraq. The purpose of the timeline is to exercise the comparative element of the history that is being explored. As a result, this research will be constructed in the following way. In chapters three and four, the domestic and diplomatic origins of George H. W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 are constructed and analysed, focusing on foreign policy between 1989 and 1991. In chapters five and six, the domestic and diplomatic origins of George W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 are explored, following the decision making process between 2001 and 2003. With the juxtaposition established between the two presidencies, there will be a conclusion that explores the similarities and differences in both foreign policy-making processes and decisions to go to war with Iraq. The qualitative analysis that emerges in
chapters three through to six explores the presidential decision-making of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush and posits an answer as to why the U.S. went to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.
Chapter Three

The Domestic Origins of the Decision to Go to War with Iraq, 1989-1991

“July 24th [1990]: If I didn’t have this budget deficit problem hanging over my head, I would be loving this job…”

In 1991, *Time* chose George H. W. Bush as its Person of the Year under the caveat that the president could be separated into two different leaders - a national leader and an international leader. The magazine applauded Bush’s response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the collapse of the Soviet Union, claiming that he had “midwifed” the new world order into existence. However, Bush had drifted on domestic policy and the magazine could only conclude, specifically in the wake of the Budget crisis, that “Bush affected domestic events decidedly for the worse.” This chapter will explore the contention that there were two different leaders, one of whom was confident and one of whom was indecisive, and will emphasise the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991. Having established the constraints of conducting foreign policy with the pressure of domestic politics, this chapter will stress the importance of continuity that was established between Ronald Reagan and Bush. It will be seen that Bush, from the outset, attempted to reconcile domestic affairs in the same way he would conduct foreign policy, through deliberation and appeals to negotiations and compromise, covered by the sleight of hand that accompanied effective diplomacy. However, it will come to the fore that domestic considerations are often

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Going to War in the Persian Gulf
Chapter Three

irrationally opposed to strategic interests and would conflict and impede policy options. By obfuscating and avoiding the issues that were raised domestically regarding Iraq and, in particular, Saddam Hussein, Bush’s immediate decision to denounce and oppose Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait in August is seen to be a step in the right direction. But Bush, through his separation of domestic and foreign affairs, found that Congressional members were able to leverage his inability to articulate domestic issues and adversely affect his domestic authority as president, dragging out the budget crisis until it influenced mid-term elections late in 1990. Overall, this chapter will emphasise the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq, a decision that Bush could only secure by blindsiding domestic politics.

This chapter begins with the election of Bush as the 41st president to the United States, who immediately confronted a domestic agenda that was significantly impacted by the lasting effects of Reagan’s budgetary practices. Understanding his election as a sign of continuity in American politics Bush did not seek out any major reversals or changes in policy, choosing instead to take time to review and evaluate existing policies. Domestically, however, the media became increasingly obsessed with Iraq and U.S. Persian Gulf policy, emphasising the continuing U.S. trade relationship despite allegations of Iraqi chemical weapons abuse. Refusing to be drawn into a debate over unilateral sanctions, Bush ignored domestic agitation and avoided any debate over unilateral sanctions against Iraq even as Saddam Hussein was characterised as a threat to the U.S. On August 2, American politicians and pundits claimed “I told you so” as Iraq invaded Kuwait, annexing the small, Persian Gulf nation, prompting Bush to address domestically the issue of Iraq in the Persian Gulf. But, the international crisis coincided with a domestic political battle as Congress sought to undermine Bush’s proposed budget plans. Although Bush was deft at handling the diplomacy of the international crisis, he could not articulate the domestic crisis and the result would be a significantly compromised budget being approved by Congress that demonstrated Bush’s shortcomings as a domestic leader. Undeterred, Bush rallied in the wake of the budget crisis to step towards the use of force in the Persian Gulf after it became
obvious Iraq was not prepared to leave Kuwait despite international sanctions. Congress, emboldened by the successful budget battle, pushed to exert its influence on Bush’s movements in the Persian Gulf. Confronted by Bush compounding the crisis in the Persian Gulf through his exchanges with reporters, Congress waited for the opportunity to debate Bush’s decision to confront Iraq in the Persian Gulf only after Saddam Hussein’s atrocities had been well established within the media, and the United Nations Security Council had already approved the option of armed force to resolve the crisis. On January 16, the domestic origins behind the decision to go to war against Iraq resulted in a Congressional resolution that approved Bush to use all necessary measures to force Iraq out of Kuwait.

The 41st President of the United States

Emerging from the vice presidency under Reagan, Bush was elected by a resounding margin over his closest competitor, democrat Michael Dukakis, despite a relatively low voter turnout. This apathy was explained, in part, by what Bush represented politically to the American people, a point that was stressed by Reagan in his 1989 New Year’s address alongside Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev. Commenting on how proud he was to have overseen the improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States during his presidency, Reagan added that “The American people have chosen [Bush] because he represents continuity in the policies, foreign and domestic, that the United States has pursued over the past 8 years. I know that Mr. Bush will continue on the same course with equal commitment.”121 The reality of Reagan’s legacy was not lost on Bush as he gave his inaugural address on January 20, 1989. Bush acknowledged the continuity within the office of the president, expressing his gratitude to Reagan for what he had achieved throughout his presidential term and adding that it was two hundred years since George

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121 George H. W. Bush, New Year’s Messages of President Reagan and President Mikhail Gorbachev, January 1, 1989.
Washington had taken the same presidential oath, but Bush was cautiously optimistic for what lay ahead. The world stood promisingly open for the U.S. as Bush explained that “A new breeze is blowing, and a nation refreshed by freedom stands ready to push on. There is new ground to be broken and new action to be taken. There are times when the future seems thick as a fog; you sit and wait, hoping the mists will lift and reveal the right path. But this is a time when the future seems a door you can walk right through into a room called tomorrow.”\(^{122}\) Bush’s rhetoric stood in stark contrast with his cautious optimism.

Despite the allegory of a hopeful, promising future rich with opportunity, in reality the remnants of Reagan’s domestic programs meant that Bush inherited a budget that had been decimated. As a consequence the remainder of the inaugural address remained firmly realistic about the extent of Bush’s social agenda with a call to Americans asking that they be prepared to help those most in need without additional resources. Bush explained, “The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet, but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices.”\(^{123}\) Public expenditure had to be harnessed because of the deficit created by Reagan. However, it relied on a bipartisan Congress in order for a full domestic agenda to take shape, and Bush appealed to the leaders in Congress for their support. Addressing the “loyal opposition”, Bush added, “I am putting my hand out to you, Mr. Speaker. I am putting my hand out to you, Mr. Majority Leader. For this is the thing: This is the age of the offered hand. And we can’t turn back clocks, and I don’t want to. But when our fathers were young, Mr. Speaker, our differences ended at the water’s edge.”\(^{124}\) It was imperative that the government “bring the federal budget into balance. And we must ensure that America stands


\(^{123}\) Ibid.

\(^{124}\) Ibid.
before the world united, strong, at peace, and fiscally strong…we need to compromise…We need harmony.” But most importantly, Bush needed support from Congress.

On February 9, Bush detailed a more comprehensive direction for the U.S. in a speech before Congress. The immediate concern was the budget deficit, and Bush’s interim measure was to implement a spending freeze that aimed at generating an amount of savings within a year. The plan was cautious and fit well with Bush’s pragmatic approach to politics but was only a stalling mechanism for the impending budget crisis. In an effort to allay criticism of his fiscal planning Bush detailed his proposed social agenda where he stressed that a diversion of funds would go towards a war on drugs. Bush outlined that “The scourge of drugs must be stopped. And I am asking tonight for an increase of almost a billion dollars in budget outlays to escalate the war on drugs. The war must be waged on all fronts.” Illicit drug policy was close to Bush’s heart and where he planned to diverge from Reagan, whom he believed was too soft on international drug traffickers. Bush’s foreign policy agenda, however, did not otherwise deviate from the carefully laid path of his predecessors. The Soviet Union, according to Bush, remained the primary U.S. concern despite progress seen under President Gorbachev. Bush explained:

Prudence and common sense dictate that we try to understand the full meaning of the change going on [in the Soviet Union], review our policies, and then proceed with caution…The fundamental facts remain that the Soviets retain a very powerful military machine in the service of objectives which are still too often in conflict with ours. So, let us take the new openness seriously, but let’s also be realistic.

Bush’s hesitation towards change was also apparent when he referred to the findings of an international conference on chemical weapons that had been held in Paris during January. Bush admitted in the Congressional address that chemical weapons “had to be banned from

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125 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
the face of the Earth, never to be used again," but explained that enforcing a chemical
weapon ban would be "extraordinarily difficult." It appeared that Bush shared Reagan’s
distaste for unilateral sanctions, and his hesitancy implied that any solution to the issue of
chemical weapons would have to emerge from a different political forum.

What had prompted Bush’s acknowledgement of chemical weapons in his address before
Congress were the proceedings of the Chemical Weapons Conference in Paris during
January. The conference had emerged amidst allegations that Iraq, in the closing stages of
its war with Iran, had used chemical weapons on its civilian Kurdish population. The
allegations had first surfaced in the final months of Reagan’s presidency, and he had quickly
declined to support Congressional efforts to sanction Iraq under the Prevention of Genocide
Act of 1988. That the conference went ahead in Paris had been a compromise supported by
Bush as vice president. However, the conference was marred from the outset by
disagreement over what should be done regarding those states, such as the U.S., that had
already stockpiled chemical weapons and retained manufacturing capabilities. This meant
that the concluding statements, which were hoped to condemn Iraq’s use of chemical
weapons, devolved into ambiguity and instead reiterated that chemical weapons be
eradicated and never used. The inconclusiveness appeared to legitimate domestic concerns
that international forums were unable to provide comprehensive solutions to acts that were
deemed immoral and inhumane, and the New York Times accused the multilateral
conference model of being ineffective and incapable of prosecuting an abuser of chemical
weapons, especially when those being condemned were invited to take part in the
proceedings. After all, as was reported, a "lack of remorse for resorting to such savagery
was evident in the behaviour of [Iraq’s] delegate to the Paris conference, who passed the
time working his crossword puzzle." After Bush had addressed Congress in February and
failed to specifically address Iraq’s alleged use of chemical weapons, the indignation of

128 Ibid.
some American commentators persisted in denouncing the lack of official response. In the *Washington Post*, Richard Cohen claimed that Iraq was “getting away with genocide,” and that a large movement of Iraqi Kurds in Northern Iraq was so obvious that even “the State department says Iraq is involved in a massive relocation program.” Cohen, drawing a parallel between Saddam Hussein and Hitler, argued that the only suitable response short of war or sanctions was “condemnation not only by the West but by other Arab governments and Third World nations as well.”

The criticism, however, fell short of influencing Bush.

Despite the commentary concerning Iraq, on March 31, Bush gave journalists an opportunity to express their thoughts and questions on the beginning of his administration in a press conference at the White House. Although the questions were far reaching, covering everything from the Chicago Mayoral race to the War on Drugs, there was no mention of the controversy surrounding Iraq’s use of chemical weapons. On the one occasion a reporter did inquire about Iraq they instead referred to reports that Iraq might be constructing a nuclear weapon, asking Bush “Does the prospect of this tiny, sometimes warlike nation being able to wage nuclear war – does it give you great concern for the future?” Bush could only respond with “I don’t want to give credibility to reports [and] I strongly stand against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We must strengthen IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] safeguards to be sure that there is as much inspection as possible.”

However, in the same press conference Bush gave a glimpse at how he understood the presidency. Asked which president he would consider a role model, Bush spoke at length about Dwight Eisenhower, explaining that “he was a man that, I’m old enough to remember, was our hero. He led the Allied Forces, and helped free the world from imperialism and Nazism. And he brought to the

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131 Ibid.
presidency a certain stability.”\textsuperscript{132} It would remain to be seen if Bush could embody those same attributes he admired in Eisenhower.

Although preoccupied with the concurrent revolutions that were unfolding throughout Eastern Europe, the U.S. relationship toward Iraq maintained a degree of scrutiny within the media. Patrick Tyler observed in the \textit{Washington Post} that Saddam Hussein “appears to be pursuing a more pragmatic political agenda that emphasizes stronger alliances with moderate Arab states, fresh appeals for western technology and a less bellicose relationship with Israel.”\textsuperscript{133} According to Tyler, U.S. officials were encouraging this behaviour so as to establish economic ties with Iraq for diplomatic leverage over chemical weapons policy. Yet it was not the U.S. relationship with Iraq that remained the most contentious issue in the Middle East. It was, instead, the ongoing mediation between Israel and the Arab world that was of more concern to Bush. In an address given by Secretary of State James A. Baker III at the political conference of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee on May 22, that coincided with Israeli President Yitzhak Shamir announcement of a “four-point plan” for conditional peace talks with the Palestinians, Bush had an opportunity to unveil the direction his leadership in an area of foreign policy that was often leaderless. Secretary Baker explained that the administration’s Middle East policy balanced the U.S. commitment to the region. However, Secretary Baker’s even-handedness caused controversy because of how he addressed the concerns of both the Israeli and Palestinian parties, stating:

For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza, security and otherwise, can be accommodated in a settlement based on UN Resolution 242. Foreswear annexation; stop settlement activity; allow schools to reopen; reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights…For Palestinians, now is the time to speak with

\textsuperscript{132} George H. W. Bush, Remarks and a question and answer session at a white house luncheon for journalists, March 31, 1989.

one voice for peace: Renounce the policy of phases in all languages, not just those
directed to the West; practice constructive diplomacy, not attempts to distort
international organizations, such as the World Health Organization; amend the
[Palestine National] covenant; translate the dialogue of violence in the intifada into a
dialogue of politics and diplomacy. Violence will not work. Reach out to Israelis and
convince them of your peaceful intentions. You have the most to gain from doing so, and
no one else can or will do it for you. Finally, understand that no one is going to deliver
Israel for you.134

Secretary Baker recalled that he was “determined that the speech be balanced, fully aware
that balance in this context might be considered something less than a virtue.”135 The
immediate reaction of the pro-Israel crowd was a cold, silent reception and the perception
that Bush was distancing himself from Israel. Although Secretary Baker recalled that after
the speech he received praise for the candid appraisal of policy, he was soon made out to
be disparaging Israel in the media.

The fact remained that the Middle East, besides its importance to U.S. foreign policy, was
still relegated to a lower priority ahead of the changes that were sweeping Eastern Europe.
In April, Bush gave an address in Hamtramck, Michigan, to acknowledge the political
changes occurring in Poland. Bush explained that “under the auspices of the roundtable
agreements, the free trade union Solidarnosc was today – this very day, under those
agreements – Solidarnosc was today formally restored. And the agreements also provide
that a free opposition press will be legalized, independent political and other free association
will be permitted, and elections for a new Polish senate will be held.”136 The changes in
Poland that had resulted in the rejection of the Soviet Union were also being replicated in

Hungary where new political leaders were hoping to permit political pluralism that had been unthinkable in the past. In Poland and Hungary, Bush witnessed the cracks in the Soviet Union as East Europe began to break away from centralised control emanating from Moscow. While Bush and his advisors were watching the Soviet Union carefully as revolution spread throughout Eastern Europe, reports emerged from China that student protestors calling for democracy were being repressed by the Chinese military in Tiananmen Square.

Bush’s immediate response was the suspension of all government to government transactions of weapons and the refusal of meetings between Chinese and United States officials. But Bush, in the news conference detailing his administration’s response, placed the repression of democratic protestors in China into a broader context, explaining that “the democratization of Communist societies will not be a smooth one, and we must react to setbacks in a way which stimulates rather than stifles progress toward open and representative systems.”137 When pressed if the administration would adhere to Congressional calls for tougher sanctions on China, Bush insisted that “I’m the President; I set the foreign policy objectives and actions taken by the executive branch. I think they know, most of them in Congress, that I have not only a keen personal interest in China, but that I understand it reasonably well. I will just reiterate to the leaders this afternoon my conviction that this is not a time for anything other than a prudent, reasoned response. And it is a time to assert over and over again our commitment to democracy.”138 It was, therefore, without much surprise that Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Senator Claibourne Pell (D - RI) was mostly ignored when he renewed his calls for Bush to implement unilateral sanctions because of Iraq’s previous persecution of its Kurdish population. In response to Senator Pell, and emerging humanitarian reports from Iraq that demanded the imposition of unilateral sanctions, the White House offered a curt dismissal that stated “we understand that a country like Iraq that has fought an eight-year war with a

138 Ibid.
neighbouring country while also facing rebellion among its own citizens faces internal security concerns. ¹³⁹ Bush was making it clear that he would not deviate from his pragmatic standing on foreign policy.

It was not until a speech on September 25 before the United Nations General Assembly that Bush explored his foreign policy agenda that had been kept largely separated from his domestic policies. Bush began by acknowledging the march of democracy across Eastern Europe and the possibility of a community of nations that shared interests and ideals meeting at the United Nations in the near future. For Bush, the true test of the United Nations would be in three areas of significant importance, not just to the international community but to the U.S. First, Bush pledged a commitment to global commerce and open markets, and the promise of opportunity that the free market embodied. This would help the U.S. domestically as open markets gave more opportunities for the U.S. to emerge from its budget morass. Second, Bush pledged a commitment to the environment, explaining that the United States would lead the way through the eradication of chlorofluorocarbons by the year 2000 and with amendments to the United States Clean Air Act. Last, it was on chemical weapons that Bush attempted to redress domestic criticism over his inaction toward Iraq, explaining that “I want to announce steps that the United States is ready to take, steps to rid the world of these truly terrible weapons, towards a treaty that will ban – eliminate – all chemical weapons from the Earth 10 years from the day it is signed.” ¹⁴⁰ Bush’s demands were conditional and, in order for the U.S. to take steps toward eradicating its own chemical weapons stockpiles, Bush demanded the Soviet Union follow suit. With the Soviets focused elsewhere in Europe, the likelihood of a coordinated response was low. Nonetheless, his refrain hinted at the importance of the United Nations to Bush. Nearing the end of his address, Bush asked the chamber “can we not bring a unity of purpose to the United Nations? Can we not make this new world of freedom the common destiny we seek? I

believe we can. I know we can.” Bush would not have to wait long to test the resolve of the United Nations in an international crisis.

Iraq Becomes an Issue

Although Bush had a low prioritisation of the Persian Gulf and refused to acknowledge reports that concerned Iraq, in particular, rumours regarding weapons of mass destruction programs, the Persian Gulf nation remained an obsession for the American media. As early as August, reports had emerged that the Iraqi government had been accused of receiving non-approved banking credit through the American branch of the Italian owned bank, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL). The reports described a scheme where undisclosed loans were authorised through the Atlanta branch of BNL for use on American agricultural loans to Iraq without the pre-requisite authorisation from BNL’s central branch. Because the loans were covered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and because their clandestine nature made them at risk of default, the news of the scandal was not received well by the public. William Safire, in the New York Times, took the opportunity to resume accusations that Bush was neglecting Iraq’s Kurdish population in favour of his pursuit for positive relations with Iraq, arguing that Bush was deliberately avoiding Iraq’s “continual rape of human rights” as the State Department “eager to woo Iraq turns a blind eye to the suffering of the people being told to assimilate or die.” Safire’s demand that Bush explicitly condemn Iraq and suspend diplomatic relations was supported by the editorial stance of the newspaper, which went on to explain that the BNL accusations illustrated Iraq’s financial instability. The editors stressed the problematic nature of possible clandestine financial operations and asked “was the US government’s guarantee to the exporters, supposedly to help our farmers sell their

141 Ibid.
grain and our manufacturers sell their farm equipment and fertilizer, really used for that high purpose? Or was a large part of the Lavoro $3 billion paid to exporters of machinery and materials and chemicals to help Iraq build poison gas facilities and long-range missiles?\footnote{The Lavoro scandal, \textit{New York times}, November 30, 1989.}

The administration was all too aware that the agricultural program was the only real economic connection to Iraq that could be utilised for diplomatic leverage and accusations of financial fraud could destabilise the tenuous relationship. However, the media had already begun to conflate Iraq’s previous chemical weapons abuse with potentialities, and the allegations of financial fraud only added to the narrative that was emerging of an unrestrained rogue power in the Persian Gulf.

It was well understood within the media that the strategic importance of the Middle East lay in the oil exports that fuelled the global energy market, and that the consolidation of oil exports by a few Arab states, namely, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates, would lead to regional instability. In 1989, the Middle East held 70% of the international oil supply and the United States imported 30% of its oil from the region.\footnote{Thomas Lippman, “4 Arab states seen in position to reclaim world oil control,” \textit{Washington Post}, October 23, 1989.} In the developing world the dependency on oil imports was even more acute, and consistent development was intrinsically connected to stable oil supplies. As a result of the pressure on international oil supplies, Bush stressed the importance of domestic natural gas suppliers to guaranteeing U.S. energy security in the future. Addressing the members of the natural gas supply association in October, Bush explained that “with growing difficulties in oil and gas leasing and difficulties in siting nuclear plants, we’re going to depend more than ever, as I say, on balanced energy sources.” Natural gas, according to Bush, was an important element for developing domestic sources of energy.\footnote{George H. W. Bush, Remarks to members of the natural gas supply association, October 19, 1989.} The focus on securing some sort of energy independence and stability was influenced in part by the political fluctuations in OPEC and the uncertainty over price changes and production limits to oil supplies. The politics of OPEC...
was covered in the *New York Times* where Ibrahim Youssef wrote “For months now two maverick members, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, have been producing almost double their allotted quota of one million barrels each.”\(^{147}\) As a result of the overproduction of oil by a couple of OPEC members, the oil price became diluted and, for a state such as Iraq that was dependent on inflated oil prices for generating higher national income, the overproduction of oil was likened to cheating within OPEC. Saudi Arabia was also concerned about the dropping oil price because of the inevitable sharp deviations in pricing alongside production that would occur within uncontrolled oil refining limits. Although an OPEC majority attempted to convince Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to curb their output their efforts were rebuffed,\(^{148}\) and in the U.S. Bush was left searching for energy policies that might guarantee a level of energy independence that insulated the U.S. from politics in the Persian Gulf.

On December 8, the news broke that Iraq had tested a long-range ballistic missile, beating the official statement from the White House. The swiftness of the reporting, together with the delayed reaction from the White House, was evidence that the media was far more interested in Iraq than Bush. An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* had decried Bush’s dismissal of the Iraqi missile launch, arguing that “Last month the Bush administration barely raised an eyebrow when Congress gutted the 1990 budget for strategic defense. Maybe someone will pay attention now that a country that wages chemical warfare has just launched a three-staged, 48-ton rocket capable of lifting a satellite into orbit.”\(^{149}\) In regards to foreign policy Bush had far more pressing matters to attend elsewhere. In Germany, the Berlin Wall was crumbling, leading to talks about the reunification of East and West Germany, and, in Panama, Bush orchestrated a military intervention to capture and extradite the Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega to face drug trafficking charges in the U.S. These events were added to a list that included the revolutionary fervour that had been building


across Eastern Europe throughout the year and the continuing issue of Chinese and U.S. relations in the wake of the Tiananmen Square protests. On January 25, 1990, Bush was asked why the administration had been so quiet regarding Middle Eastern policy. He warned the reporters not to assume “because I have addressed myself in the statements to the China question and the question of Panama or the question of our domestic agenda that we have lost interest in trying to be a catalyst in the Middle East.”

Bush could only focus on so many problems at once, and in contrast to other foreign policy concerns the Middle East was a low priority.

In the State of the Union address on January 31, Bush carried the optimism that had emerged from 1989 and added it to the promise of a new decade. Bush explained that “Nineteen forty-five provided the common frame of reference, the compass points of the postwar era we’ve relied upon to understand ourselves. And that was our world, until now. The events of the year just ended, the Revolution of ’89, have been a chain reaction, changes so striking that it marks the beginning of a new era in the world’s affairs.” The promise of a new era framed Bush’s less than ambitious social agenda that had to confront the reality of a budget deficit and a Congress that was dominated by Democrats. Bush reiterated his pledge not to raise taxes and emphasised his commitment to social programmes focused on children’s education and helping those in need. Although Bush insisted that his proposals were feasible he maintained that the agenda would depend upon

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151 Norman A. Graebner, Richard Dean Burns, Joseph M. Siracusa, Reagan, Bush, Gorbachev: Revisiting the End of the Cold War, Praeger Security International, 2008, emphasise the secondary role of the Middle East to the Reagan and Bush administrations and the end of the Cold War. Reagan establishes early in his first term that the strategic value in the Middle East resided in its status quo, thereby ensuring that so long as the region remains stable it would be a little use to be overtly and actively involved. Secretary of State Alexander Haig was clear in 1981 that the Arab world considered Palestinian autonomy a more serious threat to regional peace than any possible Soviet expansionism, despite looking for a consensus among Arab states that the Soviet Union was the greater threat (17). As a consequence of these attitudes, Bush carried a precedent into his own presidency that ensured both eyes fixed firmly, and solely, on the Soviet Union.

bipartisan support, and appealed to Congress that “there is work to do, and they [the American people] sent us here to get it done. And once again, in the spirit of cooperation, I offer my hand to all of you. Let’s work together to do the will of the people: clean air, child care, the Educational Excellence Act, crime, and drugs. It’s time to act.” The most ambitious change to the U.S. international presence, and incidentally the largest opportunity to cut costs for the budget, lay in the reorientation of defense strategy that emphasised a de-escalation in military force around the world, the so-called “peace dividend,” as a result of the end of the Cold War. Bush explained that “the time is right to move forward on a conventional arms control agreement to move us to more appropriate levels of military forces in Europe, a coherent defense program ensures the U.S. will continue to be a catalyst for peaceful change.” Later, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Planning Paul Wolfowitz explained that it was soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall that defense policy underwent revision. The work focused on five things, “(1) alternative futures of the Soviet Union and the former Soviet Bloc, Western Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere; (2) the impact of technology and other factors on future U.S. military capabilities; (3) alternative U.S. strategies in difference future environments; (4) strategies other countries might pursue, including responses to U.S. strategies; and, (5) significantly the budget and force structure implications of alternative strategies.” The effects of the end of the Cold War had been impressed into all levels of the administration.

This process took six months before any preliminary conclusions were drawn, and two years before any planning would be made public, but there was the intention going into 1990 to shift defense policy from a global to regional focus. To those in Congress, the obvious savings in the defense budget were already apparent and the House Armed Services Committee, headed by Representative Les Aspin (D-WI), had already stated in early

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153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
January that “only massive repression in the Soviet Union and a complete change in its foreign and security policies could reverse the momentum in Congress toward cuts in the military budget.”

At a question and answer session hosted by the Commonwealth Club on February 7, Bush continued to detail the changes to defense policy. Fleshing out an historical context for the shift in policy, Bush argued that the administration’s defense budget held “down spending for the fifth year in a row, down to just above 5 percent of gross national product. I’m submitting this budget at a time when the postwar world that we have known, the world that began in 1945, is changing before our very eyes.”

Bush added that “in the future, we will need to be able to thwart aggression – repel a missile or protect a sealane or stop a drug lord. We will need forces adaptable to conditions everywhere. And we will need agility, readiness, sustainability. We will need speed and stealth. And we will need leadership.”

As for the military industry that existed in the U.S. as a result of defense expenditure throughout the Cold War, Bush extolled “the Bible speaks of beating swords into plowshares. We’re transforming the military runways into municipal airports, and military bases in industrial parks and community colleges, and missile hangars into factories. I don’t know how the pruning hook business is going out there, but we may go back into that too, cast them into pruning hooks.”

Although Iraq, and the Middle East, remained in the recesses of the administrations strategic focus, the emerging threat posed by Iraq to the Middle East’s security did not feature in the changing defense policy.

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158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.
Iraq Becomes a Threat

Although Bush was primarily concerned with exploiting the “peace dividend” for budget savings, and attempting to reorientate the U.S. into a geo-political position that reflected the absence of an opposing superpower, the Persian Gulf remained a fixation for the American media. In the *Wall Street Journal* commentators identified Iraq’s rising status as an important regional state, pointing out that Iraq was now “Pumping three million barrels a day of its claimed crude-oil capacity of 4.5 million,” meaning that Iraq was the second-largest oil producer in OPEC after Saudi Arabia.\(^{160}\) The U.S. had also increased the importation of oil from Iraq to 500,000 barrels a day, putting Iraq as the sixth-largest supplier of oil to the U.S. This coincided with the strategic importance of Iraq to the U.S. Although Saudi Arabia had the largest oil reserves in the world, Iraq was second, and because they shared a border it meant stability was vital in the Persian Gulf. The strategic importance of Iraq also meant a level of official scrutiny that led human rights group’s to question who Bush was interested in protecting – Iraqi trade or Iraqi civilians. The London based Organization of Human Rights published a report by Amnesty International in late January that referred to an Iraqi army crackdown that had resulted in ten thousand people dying, with tens of thousands homeless.\(^{161}\) In February, the New York based Middle East Watch added to the criticism by publishing a report critical of Bush’s lack of condemnation for the situation in Iraq.\(^{162}\) It would not be until March that criticism would hit a tipping point. Adding to the outrage from humanitarians was the execution of Iranian-born, freelance journalist Farzad Bazoft, who was traveling in Iraq with British papers and was accused of spying. William Safire erupted with indignation in the *New York Times*, and added to his previous arguments against Iraq by writing that Saddam “sent no demonstrators to the U.S. embassy [to protest Western

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criticism of the death sentence] for good reason: the Bush Administration’s reaction was of such studied indifference as to border on condoning the assassination.”

Safire charged that “Mr. Bush ignores state murder, allows the U.S. to become dependent on Arab oil while Saddam urges OPEC to raise prices, and keeps guaranteeing loans to the country that spends billions on mustard gas and missiles.”

Despite questions about human rights abuses in the media, it was, instead, the arrest of Iraqis in London who were attempting to smuggle components thought to be for nuclear weapons into shipments bound for Iraq that prompted an official response from Bush. Although the situation was acknowledged, the official statement referred broadly to nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and avoided any specific accusations as a result of the arrests. 

Despite the official statement, a State Department official dismissed the shipments by stating that “the first rule of diplomacy is to avoid needless friction and that Iraq is being treated no differently than any other country.”

By the end of March, Saddam Hussein would finally reach the limit of Bush’s patience after warning in a speech before his military leaders that were Israel to attack Iraq, “By God, we will make fire eat up half of Israel,” and declaring that Iraq had possession of binary chemical weapons.

Secretary Baker, who had so far maintained an even approach toward Iraq as Bush pushed his domestic agenda, later admitted that Saddam’s speech meant the beginning of a strategic recalculation toward the Persian Gulf.

In the wake of Saddam Hussein’s speech Bush had an exchange with reporters on April 3. Even despite the clearly reported words of the speech, Bush avoided explicitly condemning the Iraqi leader’s stance. Addressing the reporters, Bush said of the speech that “this is no time to be talking about using chemical or biological weapons; this is no time to be

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164 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
escalating tensions in the Middle East. And I found those statements to be bad, and I would strongly urge Iraq to reject the use of chemical weapons…I would suggest that those statements be withdrawn and that – forget about talk of using chemical and biological weapons.”¹⁶⁹ When pressed for what the administration knew about Iraq’s weapons capabilities, Bush waivered. Asked if Saddam Hussein had responded to any real threats to Iraqi facilities, Bush retorted “Well, maybe…there’s a lot speculation that he’s talking about – but I’ve seen no evidence of this.”¹⁷⁰ The exchange with reporters did little to quell domestic speculation that Iraq was a dangerous state in the Persian Gulf. Safire, taking his column in the New York Times up a notch, wrote that “the Bush Administration has refrained from economic action to restrain the world’s most dangerous man,” and that American companies such as Hewlett-Packard were morally corrupt for providing “$10 million in computer technology, all approved by our Government, [being used] to crunch the numbers of murder.”¹⁷¹ Adding to Safire’s moral outrage was a corresponding column by A.M. Rosenthal, who wrote that “Mass murderers like Hitler and Hussein have a deep urge to tell the world of their blood lusts. That is their weakness – but only if the rest of the world believes, and acts.”¹⁷² But, Bush’s failure to respond to Iraq was embroiled in a wider campaign to discredit him as a Republican. Jim Hoagland, in the Washington Post, argued that Bush’s inaction toward Iraq was because he was secretly a liberal, explaining:

Liberals believe in the perfectibility of man, while conservatives believe that people have to be accepted for what they have made of themselves and dealt with accordingly. The Left says that with a little help the worst of us can be engineered into something much better. The Right responds that we are in the environment we are in because of

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.
ourselves, not because of the environment. The Bush administration came to office convinced that Saddam was among nature’s engineerables.\footnote{Jim Hoagland, “Soft on Saddam,” \textit{Washington Post}, April 10, 1990.}

Bush had done little to apprehend this perception of his political leanings with his domestic portrayal of Saddam Hussein.

Hoagland’s criticism continued to echo even as Bush gave a shared press conference with the United Kingdom’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher after a four hour meeting to discuss the political upheaval around the world. Asked if more should be done to prevent the shipment of questionable material to Iraq, Bush continued to avoid condemnation of Iraq. One of the recent intercepted shipments was a long, steel pipe, believed to be a gun barrel, which was being investigated by the United Kingdom, and Margaret Thatcher was adamant that there had been a “strong effort” in place to police the shipments going to Iraq. Bush refused to acknowledge that the piping was, in fact, for a gun, dismissing speculation that was rife in the media by stating that “I think it’s a pretty good rule: First, find the facts before you make any further comment. But the point is that, even though we don’t quite know, it was apprehended and not allowed to be loaded, pending decision.”\footnote{George H. W. Bush, News conference of the President and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom in Hamilton, Bermuda, April 13, 1990.} Bush’s avoidance of Iraq was highlighted by the increased interest in Iraq shown by Congress. In April, a Senate delegation that comprised of Senators Robert Dole (R-KS), James McClure (R-ID), Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH), Frank Murkowski (R-AK), and Alan Simpson (R-WY) travelled to Iraq and returned heaping positive praise for Saddam Hussein, referring to the Iraqi President as “a leader with whom the United States could work.”\footnote{James Baker, \textit{The Politics of Diplomacy}, 269.} This contrasted with the introduction of a bill into the Senate by Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-NY) that aimed to prohibit “U.S. assistance to Iraq unless the President certifies to the Congress that such country has opened suspected chemical weapon sites to international inspection and ratified the
The bill was deferred to a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on May 1, where Secretary Baker argued against imposing unilateral sanctions on Iraq, explaining that “such legislation would have robbed us of any flexibility in dealing with Iraq and would also have impinged upon the President’s right to conduct foreign policy.” Despite Secretary Baker’s insistence that the administration would never allow unilateral sanctions to take place, Senator Claibourne Pell (D-RI) revived the Chemical and Biological Weapon Control Act of 1989 in an effort to force unilateral sanctions on Iraq, only to have the bill postponed indefinitely on May 17. According to Safire, the Senate trip was enough to establish that Bush was more interested in a business relationship with Iraq than the alleged chemical and biological weapons that Iraq might have procured, warning his audience not to “overlook the relentlessly pro-Iraq tilt of the Bush White House or Saddam Hussein’s new supporter, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole of corn-producing Kansas.”

Trying as hard as he might, it appeared as though Bush could not avoid Saddam Hussein in his everyday dealings with the American media.

Adding to the media’s continued fascination with Saddam Hussein, the Wall Street Journal, late in June, published the first interview with the Iraqi leader by a Western news source in six years. More important, Saddam reiterated a number of statements that Bush had avoided acknowledging. When pressed about his statements concerning Israel, Saddam explained that Iraq “shall respond to an Israeli attack whenever it comes and wherever…if Israel attacks one country and there is no response, then the second country to be attacked surely will be Iraq.” And when asked how he felt about some Western media sources calling him

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the Butcher of Baghdad, Saddam replied “Weakness doesn’t assure achieving the objectives required by a leader.”\(^{181}\) According to Saddam, such insults only showed that the West feared Iraq would become a powerful beacon of independence and strength to the rest of the Arab world. After all, it was only “natural such people reject expansionism, reject hegemony and reject capitulation.”\(^{182}\) But, Saddam left the interview without a doubt as to where he saw Iraq’s position in the Middle East. When asked if he believed his chemical weapons were enough of a deterrent, he responded, yes, but continued “If the U.S. were to lend us nuclear weapons with the objective of balancing those Israel was given we shall not decline them.”\(^{183}\) Despite Secretary Baker later describing Iraqi behaviour early in 1990 as simply “mischief,”\(^{184}\) for Saddam Hussein it was imperative that Iraq received a steady income from oil production through the guaranteed prices and quotas set by OPEC. This meant that Iraq had a strategic investment in ensuring that OPEC remained favourable to Iraq, and this meant stressing Iraq’s strengths whenever possible. By July, Saddam’s ‘mischief’ had transformed into outright aggression, and he publically demanded that the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait cease their oil overproduction. Although the administration understood the strategic implications of OPEC for Iraq, Bush remained silent as the media remained fixated on Iraq.

By July 26, Saddam had 30,000 Iraqi troops stationed on the Kuwaiti border, with ammunition and supplies to last 30 days. When Bush was pressed for an explanation the official response was that in the event that Kuwait was attacked the U.S. would condemn “such a move and would work diplomatically to force Iraq’s withdrawal.”\(^{185}\) However, the administration did deploy additional naval vessels to the Persian Gulf under the guise of conducting joint naval exercises with the United Arab Emirates to show solidarity, providing

\(^{181}\) Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Ibid.
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
\(^{185}\) Ibid.
adequate cover for the arrival of KC-135’s, U.S. aerial refuelling aircraft.\textsuperscript{186} Reports in the media were mixed as some journalists warned that “Unless the Western and Arab nations react firmly and quickly [Saddam’s] bullying could ignite another war in the fragile Middle East.”\textsuperscript{187} Alternatively, in the \textit{Wall Street Journal}, it was argued that the naval exercises did not send a clear enough message, and Bush was seen as “not simply having answered a friend’s call for help, but rather as having intervened militarily to encourage overproduction of oil to drive down prices for the U.S.’s own imports.”\textsuperscript{188} Some members of Congress, on the other hand, welcomed Saddam’s open aggression, and it was used as an opportunity to press for trade sanctions that had been continually opposed by the administration. Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-NY), who had pressured Bush to respond to Iraq, was now particularly critical and called Saddam “a butcher, a killer, a bully – some day we’re going to have to stand up to him. Why not now?”\textsuperscript{189} Secretary Baker, later reflecting on the invasion, remained unconvinced that Bush could have deterred Saddam Hussein from annexing Kuwait earlier. Although there was a Congressional push to sanction Iraq, Secretary Baker argued that “shifting a policy away from cooperation toward confrontation is always a more difficult proposition – particularly when support for the existing policy is as firmly embedded among various constituencies and bureaucratic interests as was the policy toward Iraq…I continue to believe that if the President had said prior to August 1990 that we were willing to go to war to protect Kuwait, many members of Congress would have been muttering impeachment.”\textsuperscript{190} As Congress and Bush traded rhetorical barbs over the effectiveness of unilateral sanctions, Saddam increased the troops stationed at Kuwait’s border from 30,000 to 100,000. Two days later, on August 2, Iraq invaded Kuwait.

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Domestic Politics During an International Crisis

As Iraqi troops crossed the Kuwaiti border, Bush was meant to unveil the new U.S. defense policy in Aspen, Colorado.\textsuperscript{191} Richard Haass, who was an adviser on the National Security Council, explained that “improvisation was the order of the day. There was no playbook and no contingency plan for dealing with this scenario or anything like it.”\textsuperscript{192} The first formal National Security Council meeting went the extra step to invite media representatives into the cabinet room so that Bush could recite an official statement regarding the Iraqi invasion. Bush reiterated what Ambassador Thomas Pickering had said at the United Nations Security Council meeting earlier that morning, stressing “we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces. There is no place for this sort of naked aggression in today’s world, and I’ve taken a number of steps to indicate the deep concern that I feel over the events that have taken place.”\textsuperscript{193} Bush remained ambiguous when pressed if the U.S. would respond militarily to the invasion of Kuwait. Asked if intervention was an option, Bush replied “We’re not discussing intervention. I would not discuss any military options even if we’d agreed upon them.”\textsuperscript{194} Although the National Security Council meeting suggested the administration was taking the situation in the Persian Gulf seriously, all eyes turned to Bush’s address in Aspen. With the crisis in the Persian Gulf, any mention of defense policy was suddenly more relevant. Bush explained that “our task is to shape our defense capabilities to these changing strategic circumstances. In a world less driven by an immediate threat to Europe and the danger of global war, in a world where the size of our forces will increasingly be shaped by the needs of regional contingencies and peacetime presence, we know that our forces can be small…I can tell you now, we calculate that by


\textsuperscript{192} Richard Haass, War of necessity, War of Choice: A memoir of two Iraq wars, (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 60.

\textsuperscript{193} George H. W. Bush, Remarks and an exchange with reporters on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
1995 our security needs can be met by an active force 25 percent smaller than today’s.”

As an additional cause of the defense policy restructure were budget constraints impeding other domestic proposals, although Bush was quick to reassure his audience that the U.S. would spare no expense to ensure that the military was equipped with the best technology available. But, downsizing the military promised immediate benefits. Without much surprise, the press conference following the Aspen speech, which was also attended by Prime Minister Thatcher, focused on the crisis in the Persian Gulf. Thatcher took the lead and explained that the next step to confront Iraq was through the United Nations Security Council, depending on the collective will of the United Nations members. Bush, however, was pressed again over whether the U.S. would intervene militarily, and refused to entertain the question. In an attempt to elicit an answer, one reporter asked “isn’t Saddam Hussein at the root of this problem? Hasn’t he replaced Qadhifi [leader of Libya] as sort of the bad boy of the region? Would you like to see him removed? And what can you do about him?”

Bush maintained that he would like to see Iraq withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait. When the reporter asked if Bush believed Saddam would remain a source of mischief in the region, he retorted “If he behaves this way, he’s going to be a constant source.” Saddam Hussein had cast a shadow over Bush’s promise of a new, peaceful tomorrow.

Richard Haass noted that among Bush’s advisers crafting a policy in response to the Persian Gulf crisis was tireless. Through a mixture of sleep deprivation and the weight of international affairs, Haass noted that “it is precisely during crises when those making policy are closest to their physical limits and in many ways not at their best.” On August 5, the

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196 George H. W. Bush, Remarks and a Question and Answer Session with reporters in Aspen, Colorado, Following a meeting with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, August 2, 1990.
197 Ibid.
198 Although Bush did not have the opportunity to redefine U.S. defense policy in August, 1990, the war with Iraq in January, 1991, demonstrated numerous revolutionary aspects of U.S. military power. Many of which informed how war was wages against Iraq in 2003. See Keith L. Shimko, The Iraq Wars and America’s Military Revolutions, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
pressure was mounting on Bush as he curtly responded to a question as to how the U.S. hoped to prevent the imposition of a puppet government in Kuwait, with “Just wait. Watch and learn.”\(^{200}\) Bush refused to comment on the progress of Arab diplomacy, nor on whether the U.S. would assist its Arab allies in the region, but he did remark, off the cuff, that “this aggression will not stand.”\(^{201}\) The throwaway line was the first glimpse at how serious Bush was taking the Iraqi invasion. To Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, the statement was more than he expected from the president.\(^{202}\) How Bush planned to respond to Iraqi aggression became clear on August 8, when he announced to the nation the deployment of U.S. armed forces to Saudi Arabia in order to form a defensive shield on the border shared with Iraq. Bush reiterated that “a puppet regime imposed from the outside is unacceptable. The acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable. No one, friend or foe, should doubt our desire for peace; and no one should underestimate our determination to confront aggression.”\(^{203}\) Bush added that “the sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia is of vital interest to the United States,”\(^{204}\) and that “given the Iraqi government's history of aggression against its own citizens as well as its neighbours, to assume Iraq will not attack again would be unwise and unrealistic.”\(^{205}\) In the press conference that followed, Bush stressed that the deployment was for defensive purposes, adding “I'm not preparing for a long ground war in the Persian Gulf. There's not a war going on there right now…My military objective is to see Saudi Arabia defended. That's the military objective. Our overall objective is to see Saddam Hussein get out and go back and to have the rightful regime of Kuwait back in place.”\(^{206}\) Asked if the U.S. could contain Saddam Hussein in the long run, Bush responded that “I would think that if this international lesson is taught well that Saddam Hussein would behave

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\(^{201}\) Ibid.


\(^{203}\) George H. W. Bush, Address to the Nation announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990.

\(^{204}\) Ibid.

\(^{205}\) Ibid.

differently in the future. And that’s what has been so very important about this concerted United Nations effort."\(^{207}\) Despite the pressing nature of the Persian Gulf crisis, one reporter returned Bush’s attention to the impending budget crisis and fears of a recession. Ensuring that the two crises remained apart, Bush carefully answered that “I don’t want to mix it [a response about the budget agreement] into this briefing that is largely dominated by the world concern about the Middle East.”\(^{208}\) Not everyone in the audience believed in Bush’s insistence to keep the two crises apart.

In the absence of any official rationale for the U.S. response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, past and present policymakers rushed to fill the gaps. James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defence, Secretary of Energy, and Director of the CIA under former President Jimmy Carter, argued that in the wake of the Iraqi invasion energy security was imperative, and that “With Saudi Arabia and the entire Arabian Peninsula at risk, there is at least the possibility of much of the Persian Gulf’s oil reserves being under the domination of a single, not entirely friendly, power.”\(^{209}\) According to Schlesinger, much of Bush’s success would depend on how well he could articulate an energy policy that reduced dependence on Persian Gulf oil and separated the United States economy from the political instability of the region.

Representative Les Aspin (D-WI), on the other hand, was more aggressive than Schlesinger, and argued that “the bottom line boils down to ridding the world of Saddam Hussein or his army. We can tolerate Saddam Hussein without a million-man army; and we can tolerate Iraq’s army without Saddam Hussein.”\(^{210}\) It was former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who was most explicit in his appraisal of the Persian Gulf crisis. Kissinger explained that the Kuwait crisis was a watershed for Bush as “success will boost world morale and the world economy. It will strengthen the President’s domestic leadership. Failure will blight all future

\(^{207}\) Ibid.

\(^{208}\) Ibid.


domestic and international efforts.”²¹¹ The president had passed the point of no return when he deployed the U.S. military to Saudi Arabia, a decision that Kissinger supported, as no Arab state had the ability to counter a belligerent Saddam and his war hardened army. But, Kissinger warned Bush that “if sanctions prove too uncertain and diplomacy unavailing, the United States will need to consider a surgical and progressive destruction of Iraq’s military assets - especially since an outcome that leaves Hussein in place and his military machine unimpaired might turn out to be only an interlude between aggressions.”²¹² And there were some in Congress who took the opportunity to push the topic of Bush’s handling of the Iraqi invasion in the media. Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-NY), building on his campaign to unilaterally sanction Iraq for previous chemical weapons violations, argued in the *New York Times* that Bush had to elaborate plans to attack Iraq. Senator D’Amato stressed that Bush could not “settle for anything less than [Saddam’s] removal from power.”²¹³ According to Senator D’Amato, Bush would be eliminating a potential nuclear threat by cutting Saddam from Iraqi leadership. Senator Terry Stanford (D-NC), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, added that Bush risked repeating mistakes made in Vietnam if he chose to militarily intervene in the Persian Gulf. Senator Stanford explained that the most effective weapon the U.S. could utilise was “the embargo that will cut off Iraq’s revenue.”²¹⁴ Bush had options, but it was unclear where he was heading.

Despite the overwhelming nature of the Iraqi invasion, Bush still had to confront a budget crisis that risked blowing out of proportion as his attention was elsewhere. Faced with a Democrat majority in Congress, Bush’s budget promises were at risk of being derailed. At a press conference on August 14, Bush lamented that one hundred days “after I called on Democrats and Republicans in the Congress to work with me toward a bipartisan solution, I note, frankly in sadness, that after 3 full months the Democrats have yet to offer one single

²¹² Ibid.
proposal at the budget summit. I’ve been reluctant to go public in this manner. We’ve dealt in
good faith with the leaders. We have played by the rules. Now it is up to the Democrats who
control Congress.”\textsuperscript{215} In response to questions about whether his negotiation strategy with
Congress should change, Bush answered that “I’m still here in a nice, tranquil mood wanting
to discuss it with them.”\textsuperscript{216} Bush had until September before any counterproposals would be
forthcoming because Congress was in recess. However, the administration’s willingness to
work with the Democrats in Congress upset a subsection of Republicans who, led by
Representative Newt Gingrich (R-GA), leaked a budget package that ran counter to Bush,
yet was in stark opposition to the Democrat’s proposals.\textsuperscript{217} Despite the political tussle that
was developing over the Budget, Bush, according to the polls, had overwhelming support for
his actions so far in the Persian Gulf, and the budget crisis was yet to damage his approval
rating. From a survey conducted in the middle of August, the \textit{New York Times} reported 74%
of Americans approving Bush’s response to the Iraqi invasion. This added to a 60% overall
approval rating as president.\textsuperscript{218}

Bush had found a balance in his approach to the Persian Gulf crisis by August 28.
Addressing Members of Congress, Bush stated that “the basic elements of our strategy are
now in place. And where do we want to go? Well, our intention, and indeed the intention of
almost every country in the world, is to persuade Iraq to withdraw, that it cannot benefit from
this illegal occupation, that it will pay a stiff price trying to hold on and an even stiffer price by
widening the conflict.”\textsuperscript{219} In response, Congress was largely supportive of Bush’s stance.

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\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.  
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support in Congress and among the American people.²²⁰ In another address before Congress on September 11, Bush attempted to arrest that support and divert it towards a resolution to the domestic budget crisis, conflating the two issues despite his insistence throughout August that they remain apart. Reiterating, again, the objectives agreed at the United Nations Security Council, Bush added that “the crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a new world order – can emerge: a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace.”²²¹ Despite Bush’s confidence toward resolving the Persian Gulf crisis, he acknowledged that the budget crisis was a threat to domestic stability. Bush explained that “For America to lead, America must remain strong and vital. Our world leadership and domestic strength are mutual and reinforcing.”²²² It was therefore imperative that Congress find a solution to the budget crisis so that the United States could resolve the Persian Gulf crisis. Bush added, “Most Americans are sick and tired of endless battles in the Congress and between the branches over budget matters. It is high time we pulled together and get the job done right.”²²³ And to see that a solution was found over the budget crisis, Bush set October 1 as the deadline for a suitable budget proposal.

According to Richard Haass, Congress’ main concern about the Persian Gulf crisis was in regards to burden sharing. Haass recalled Representative Les Aspin (D-WI) wondering whether too much multilateral commitment would constrain the freedom of United States to act.²²⁴ However, Senator Claibourne Pell (D-RI), who had been a staunch and vocal opponent of the United States’ relationship with Iraq since 1988, criticised Bush for a lack of


²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Richard Haas, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 89.
consultation with Congress before committing U.S. armed forces to Saudi Arabia. Senator Pell warned Bush, as Congress had warned presidents in the past, that he did not have authority to engage in a war without invoking the War Powers Act. Senator Pell complained that “The Administration has not been tolerant of any meaningful congressional role in foreign affairs,” and that Bush and his advisors “seem oriented to nothing less than restoring the arrogance of power.”^{225} However, Senator Pell's criticism appeared in the context of the Democrat’s political campaign for the mid-term Congressional elections in November that had been leaked from the Democratic National Convention. The plan insisted that Democrat candidates pursue the domestic initiative, arguing that although Bush had to “stop (Iraqi) aggression in the Persian Gulf,” he was yet to “start fighting a recession at home.”^{226} Despite the political grand-standing, the House of Representatives passed a bill that supported Bush’s actions in the Persian Gulf, even expressing approval for the deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia in August. The bill stopped short of granting Bush the authority to conclude the crisis by any means, adding that the U.S. remained committed to the United Nations Security Council resolutions and finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis.^{227}

Bush emerged from a summit with Congressional leaders on September 30, with a budget agreement that was hoped to break the economic deadlock in the U.S. Bush praised the bipartisanship that had consolidated as a result of the summit, and pledged that the entire budget package would be signed into law by October 13, hoping to put to rest the domestic crisis that threatened to fracture the precarious diplomatic structure that surrounded Iraq. Bush freely admitted that the agreement had required compromise and explained that “there will be some tough fights ahead but I have pledged…that I will do everything I can to lay aside partisanship here and to take the case for this deal to the American people in every way I can. Sometimes you don’t get it just the way you want, and this is such a time for

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me."  

Bush continued to call for a rally of support around the budget package in an address to the nation on October 2. Bush added that “our nation is standing together against Saddam Hussein’s aggression. But here at home there’s another threat, a cancer gnawing away at our nation’s health. That cancer is the budget deficit.” Bush appealed to Americans to show their representatives that they approved of the budget agreement, asking to “tell your Congressmen and Senators you support this deficit reduction agreement. If they are Republicans, urge them to stand with the President. Urge them to do what the bipartisan leadership has done: come together in the spirit of compromise to solve this national problem. If they’re Democrats, urge them to stand with their congressional leaders.” But, by October 6, there remained detractors in Congress who refused to support the agreement, and it was blocked in the House of Representatives. Clearly annoyed, Bush held a news conference where he announced his intention to veto the budget proposal in order to force negotiation on the agreement in Congress. When asked why Congress, including representatives from his own party, opposed the agreement despite Congressional leaders agreeing to compromise, Bush answered that “it’s easy when you don’t have to be responsible for something. It’s easy to just get up and say, hey, I’ve got an election in 3 weeks, and I’m going to stand up against this particular package – Medicare, the taxes, the home heating oil, or the fact there’s not enough growth or not enough incentive. Any individual member can do that.” By now, the budget crisis had taken its toll on the polls, even threatening the handling of the Persian Gulf crisis. The New York Times reported that 9 out of 10 Americans were not ready for the United States to start a war with Iraq in order to solve the Persian Gulf Crisis, and Bush’s approval rating dived from 76% in August to

230 Ibid.  
55% in October.\textsuperscript{233} In the media it was argued that no matter how adept Bush appeared at handling foreign policy “the intellectual, political and ideological underpinnings of his domestic policy are fragile straws.”\textsuperscript{234} Domestic politics had finally breached Bush’s authority over foreign policy.

Bush conceded defeat and compromised on a budget deal by October 27. The agreement was a blow to his domestic agenda as the budget did not contain vital savings, and introduced new taxes that Bush had promised to avoid. Bush later explained at a press conference that “All political points of view have sacrificed to bring this agreement about. And, needless to say, I don’t like raising taxes and never will, but there is a price to divided government, and that means that I have had to compromise on items that I feel strongly about in order to do what I think is best for the country.”\textsuperscript{235} Although Bush tried to emphasise the best elements of the agreement, and stressed that it contained compromises from all political parties, the media remained fixated on the broken promise of Bush’s election campaign, the negative effects of the capitulation on Bush’s credibility, and, more pressing, on the mid-term elections in early November. Bush refused to state that the budget deal was a good one, and tried to stress that he did not support the new taxes despite the compromises he had made. When asked what he thought of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee recommendation that Republican candidates distance themselves from the administration, Bush could only reply “No, I want everybody right with me on everything I do.”\textsuperscript{236} With the conclusion of the Budget crisis, Bush had the opportunity to focus and reinforce the United States’ response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

\textsuperscript{233} James Gerstenzang; David Lauter, “Popularity of Bush Plummet to 55% in poll,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, October 9, 1990.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
Taking the United States to War

The likelihood of an armed intervention became more obvious throughout October as Iraq remained firmly embedded in Kuwait, with economic sanctions doing little to force Saddam Hussein to withdraw. At meetings with Congressional leaders during October, the position had emerged that Congress would oppose any move from sanctions to armed force. Richard Haass recalled that “this position was held by virtually everyone else, with only a clear minority prepared to support the use of force and then only if specifically authorized by the U.N. Security Council...[Bush] rejected having policy dictated by public opinion yet understood how important public and congressional support would be if he took the country to war.”\(^{237}\) Despite the latent congressional opposition, in an exchange with reporters in San Francisco on October 29, Bush made it clear when asked if he felt he needed Congress to approve any U.S. military action against Iraq that “History is replete with examples where the President has had to take action. And I’ve done this in the past and certainly – somebody mentioned provocation – would have no hesitancy at all.”\(^{238}\) Bush’s assertion that he would act as any president would was backed up by Secretary Baker, who, at a speech at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on the same day, stressed “let no one doubt: We will not rule out the possible use of force if Iraq continues to occupy Kuwait.”\(^{239}\) With Bush and Secretary Baker stressing in two separate addresses their willingness to use force, Congressional members immediately took to the media to add their opposition to the administration’s stance. Senate Majority Leader Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) warned, “Only the Congress can declare war. The President has no legal authority to commit us to war.”\(^{240}\)

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Despite Senator Mitchell’s vocal opposition, Bush, on October 31, quietly approved the reinforcement of troops in Saudi Arabia to double what had already been deployed.241

With the mid-term elections in full swing, Bush did his best to shift attention back to his handling of the Persian Gulf crisis on November 1, in order to buttress any domestic backlash for a diplomatic push in the United Nations Security Council that would authorise the use of force. At a press conference in Orlando, Florida, Bush stressed that “I believe it is essential that the American people fully understand the objectives of the United States and the United Nations as well as the magnitude of the outrage perpetrated by the Government of Iraq.”242 The timing of the news conference, however, led to accusations that Bush was politicising the Persian Gulf crisis in order to assist Republican candidates in the mid-term elections. In response, Bush asserted that “what I try to do is separate out the foreign affairs, the Iraq question, from domestic politics.”243 However, it was difficult to see past Bush’s efforts to introduce a militant posture toward Iraq. In one instance, a line of questioning brought up the comparison Bush had made between Saddam Hussein and Hitler, and in response Bush stretched the comparison further, stating “I see many similarities by the way the Iraqi forces behaved in Kuwait and the Death’s Head regiments behaved in Poland. Go back and take a look at your history, and you’ll see why I’m as concerned as I am.”244 On November 8, Bush made it clear that the U.S. was prepared to use force, reiterating the United Nations Security Council objectives and explaining “after consultation with king Fahd [of Saudi Arabia] and our other allies, I have today directed the Secretary of Defense to increase the size of U.S. forces committed to Desert Shield to ensure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve our common goals.”245 When pressed if that meant that the U.S. was now at war with Iraq, Bush argued that the offensive posture was “just continuing to do what we feel is necessary to complete

243 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
our objectives…that have been clearly stated.” But, for all the justification that Bush could massage into a press conference to help explain the increase in troops, it was clear that the administration was losing the battle for domestic support. Richard Haass recalled that during meetings with the congressional leadership more than one member stressed that “we should not turn to using force unless we were provoked.”

Haass explained that Bush faced a dilemma in his attempts to increase Congressional support, as “if we repeated what we’d been saying, people would get tired of hearing it and turn us off. If we added new arguments, the papers would be filled with articles that the administration had changed its policy.”

This meant that Bush had to reinforce the objectives that had been established since August from the United Nations Security Council, conflated by his insistence that Iraqi aggression would not stand, and he could not afford to deviate.

At the conclusion of the mid-term elections, the Republicans underwent a loss of seats in both houses, albeit less than was initially assumed, and Bush officially acknowledged the deployment of additional troops to Saudi Arabia that had been completed on November 8. Bush explained to Congressional leaders that “the deployment will ensure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve our common goals.”

Despite having initially supported Bush’s decision-making throughout August in order for the U.S. to successfully implement international sanctions against Iraq, Congressional Democrats were now emboldened by the mid-term election results and were finding it difficult to now interject in the Persian Gulf crisis. This change in attitude was exemplified by Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), head of the Armed Services Committee, who publically stated that Bush had “made a very good case for sending troops to defend Saudi Arabia and to enforce the United Nations economic embargo against Iraq.” But, Nunn insisted that Congress would not determine if Kuwait was worth going to war over. Senator

246 Ibid.


248 Ibid.

Nunn stressed that Bush had to make the case first.\textsuperscript{250} In an effort to influence the Administration, Senator Nunn used his position as head of the Armed Services Committee to push for a committee hearing to better determine Congress’ stance on the Persian Gulf crisis. The resulting testimonies were heavily stacked against the Administration, and were in favour of maintaining sanctions as opposed to armed intervention. Two former Joint Chiefs testified that the U.S. military could logistically wait for sanctions to work, even for another eighteen months if it was required.\textsuperscript{251} Kissinger was the only divergent voice at the hearing and was left to explain that “The Issue in Arabia is not American staying power but the host country’s domestic stability.”\textsuperscript{252} Although sanctions might be a sensible option on a timescale that assumed infinite time and patience, the reality was that Saudi Arabia would not tolerate the presence of foreign troops indefinitely and without the reversal of Iraqi aggression the entire effort would be in vain.

In an effort to counter the rising criticism from Congress, Bush addressed an open letter to the American people on November 26, under the title “Why we are in the Gulf,” in which he restated why the U.S. had deployed 200,000 armed service members to Saudi Arabia. First, Bush explained that “the world must not reward aggression,” therefore the international community had to make a stand against Iraq in order to create an example for the post-Cold War world.\textsuperscript{253} Second, U.S. national security was at stake so long that Saddam Hussein threatened the world’s oil supplies.\textsuperscript{254} Again, Bush did not hesitate to elaborate on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, restating the atrocities that Saddam Hussein had committed against his own people and Kuwaitis. Bush added, “The fact that Saddam is developing the most sophisticated weapons of mass destruction known to man – nuclear and biological weapons – is ominous indeed.”\textsuperscript{255} For these reasons it was imperative that the United States

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\item\textsuperscript{252} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{253} George H. W. Bush, “Why We are in the Gulf”, \textit{Newsweek}, November 26, 1990.
\item\textsuperscript{254} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.
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remain strong when confronting this dangerous leader. The United Nations Security
Council, on November 29, reinforced Bush’s intentions to use armed force against Iraq when it approved resolution 678, and the use of “all necessary means” to ensure Iraq withdrew from Kuwait. Central to the resolution was the inclusion of a deadline on January 15, 1991, for the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. The pursuit of a United Nations Security Council resolution while Congress was still mired in committee’s searching for a position on the Persian Gulf enraged Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), who argued “the President feels the need to obtain U.N. approval for a U.S. offensive but won’t commit himself to seeking congressional approval.” But, Bush was not so easily drawn into arguments with congressional members over the minutiae of the administration approach to the Persian Gulf crisis. After all, he now had international support for military action.

Having secured United Nations Security Council authorisation to use force, and having published an open letter reinforcing why the U.S. was in Saudi Arabia, Bush held a press conference to stress the importance of supporting the Administration’s approach to the Persian Gulf crisis. Bush explained that “We’re dealing with a dangerous dictator all too willing to use force who has weapons of mass destruction and is seeking new ones and who desires to control one of the world’s key resources – all at a time in history when the rules of the post-cold war world are being written.” For all Bush’s explanations and statements, the press was more interested in his unwillingness to recall Congress from its winter adjournment and make them debate the approval of the United Nations Security Council resolution. After being asked if he believed an American life was worth sacrificing for an end

256 John Mueller, in his book Policy and Opinion in the Persian Gulf, stresses that demonizing Saddam Hussein was central to Bush’s efforts to convince the American people that war with Iraq was necessary. However, Mueller explains that by focusing on Saddam Hussein, Bush inadvertently made the Iraqi leaders removal a central expectation from the American people. Although Bush would continue to clarify that the liberation of Kuwait was the objective of a military confrontation with Iraq, Mueller points to polls that show public opinion leaning towards to ouster of Saddam Hussein as a core objective to any military conflict in the Persian Gulf. John Mueller, Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War (The University of Chicago Press, 1994).


to the Persian Gulf Crisis, one journalist launched a tirade at Bush, adding that they wanted to remind Bush that “when Foley speaks as Speaker of the House, he may be Speaker of the House, but he sure as hell doesn’t represent Florida and Texas.” Bush retorted that if Congress “want to come back here and endorse what the President of the United States has done and what the United Nations Security Council has done, come on, we’re ready. I’d like to see it happen. But what I don’t want to do is have it come back and end up where you have 435 voices in one House and 100 on the other saying what not to do and saying – kind of hand-wringing operation that would send bad signals.” The journalist, clearly annoyed by Bush’s response, added “Sir, you have a majority rule in this country, and you seem to be afraid of it…you and Jim Baker give the other countries a chance to talk, and you give the United Nations a chance to talk, but you won’t give the United States people a chance to debate with you.”

The exchange in the press conference spilled over into the editorial pages that followed. The New York Times, unconvinced by Secretary Baker’s own rationale for the war, explained “Iraq has been deterred from moving against Saudi Arabia and suffers economic punishment rather than reward for grabbing Kuwaiti oil fields.” Whereas the Los Angeles Times added that Bush’s escalation of the troop deployment in Saudi Arabia had echoes of Lyndon Johnson’s decisions after the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. However, the editorial added that Bush “is still groping for a rallying cry to get teenagers and their parents to believe it is worth risking their lives to free Kuwait, save gulf oil or topple Saddam.”

Within Congress, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee began to consolidate opposition and accused Bush of an “indecent rush toward war against Iraq,” asserting “that woefully inadequate thought had been given to the consequences of such a war.” According to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for the first time in recent history “an American

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259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
Administration has more comprehensive support abroad for a major foreign-policy position than it has at home."\textsuperscript{265} Despite the initial backlash, Bush remained undeterred.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee continued to add pressure on the Administration by hearing a testimony from former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who criticized Bush’s decision-making process by observing that “I don’t have a sense that in this Administration the decision-making circle is very wide…I think it’s basically confined to four people, and I don’t have a sense that there are fundamental disagreements. There are strengths in that, but there’s also the danger that you begin to have a situation in which views are reinforced rather than examined.”\textsuperscript{266} The bi-polarity in the support and dissent Bush was receiving in the press continued when former Secretary of State Alexander Haig wrote in the \textit{New York Times} that Saddam was not yet a Hitler, but was on his way to becoming one. Haig explained that although a peaceful resolution to the Persian Gulf Crisis was preferable, if force had to be used in Kuwait then it had to be used decisively and for a clear purpose.\textsuperscript{267} It was becoming obvious that the publicised exchange between the Administration, Congress, and outside experts was distorting the understanding of the Persian Gulf Crisis. In one particular instance, when Secretary Baker was attempting to explain foreign policy to reporters, it was noted that “however one weighs the televised give-and-take over the Administration efforts to rally the nation for war, it confirms the difficulty of expounding policy calculations through the medium that immediately translates them into human costs.”\textsuperscript{268} The human costs of the occupation were compounded when, on December 13, American hostages were released by Saddam Hussein. In a short exchange with reporters on the same day, Bush was asked if Iraq should be granted some leeway now that they had released the hostages, to which Bush responded “Hell, no! Not one thing! You don’t

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.
reward a kidnapper.”269 Bush’s steadfastness was reflected in the polls, despite the Congressional hearings, that showed his approval rating rose to 61%, while 45% to 54%, depending on the poll and question, supported the use of force against Iraq.270

Although Bush had come under immense domestic pressure toward the end of 1990, Richard Haass believed that “we had done all right overall. We had won the debate over the stakes and why this was a vital national interest. Where we were still falling short was on debate as to why we could not just wait longer for sanctions to work.”271 This was not for lack of trying. Throughout December, Bush had attempted to orchestrate a diplomatic meeting between the U.S. and Iraq for one last chance to resolve the crisis peacefully. After having every suggestion rejected, Bush, on January 3, offered one last chance for a meeting to take place between Secretary Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva. Bush was adamant that although there would be the opportunity for discussions “this offer is being made subject to the same conditions as my previous attempt: no negotiations, no compromises, no attempts at face-saving, and no rewards for aggression.”272 The Iraqis, understanding that they had pushed their luck as far as they could, took the offer and agreed to meet with Baker in Geneva on January 9. With the promise of one last diplomatic meeting to find a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf Crisis all that remained was consolidating domestic support and confronting opposition in Congress. The additional benefit of the meeting between Secretary Baker and Foreign Minister Aziz was that Bush could honestly say he had gone the extra mile for peace. According to Richard Haass, receiving support from Congress “was desirable not just politically but also philosophically. Conservatives are meant to use traditional procedures and institutions not just when they prove to be

convenient.\footnote{Richard Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 110.} But, the Administration was careful to ask for approval from Congress, not authorisation.

On January 5, Bush addressed the nation in a final opportunity to prepare Americans for a possible war against Iraq. In the address, Bush stressed that the U.S. had gone the “extra mile” to secure a peaceful solution, but all efforts had been in vain. The economic sanctions, although they had contained Saddam Hussein, had not forced Iraq from its occupation of Kuwait, and Saddam Hussein would remain a threat unless he was confronted. Bush added “we have seen too often in this century how quickly any threat to one becomes a threat to all. At this critical moment in history, at a time the cold war is fading into the past, we cannot fail.”\footnote{George H. W. Bush, Radio Address to the Nation on the Persian Gulf Crisis, January 5, 1991.} Bush did have one promise for the American people, adding, “there will be no more Vietnams.”\footnote{Ibid.} Former President Richard M. Nixon, after the address, wrote in the New York Times that Bush was justified for intervening in Kuwait, but not because “Saddam is a cruel leader,” nor because it would become a “war for democracy.”\footnote{Richard Nixon, “Why,” New York Times, January 6, 1991.} Nixon explained that Saddam Hussein “has unlimited ambitions to dominate one of the most important strategic areas in the world,” and if Bush did not take a stand against Saddam now “we will have to stop him later, when the cost in young American lives will be infinitely greater.”\footnote{Ibid.} Nixon supported Bush’s actions toward Iraq and dismissed those who were calling for more time for sanctions to work, arguing “the most critics can claim is that it is possible sanctions might work. It is certain military force will work.”\footnote{Ibid.} Congress, dominated by Democrats, added Nixon’s support to Kissinger’s, and ignored both.

On January 11, Congress opened debate over two resolutions in both the House and the Senate that would approve the use of force against Iraq in order to fulfil the conditions of the

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\begin{footnote}{George H. W. Bush, Radio Address to the Nation on the Persian Gulf Crisis, January 5, 1991.} \end{footnote}
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United Nations Security Council resolutions. Although Bush understood the necessity of consolidating domestic support in order to present a credible use of force to end the international crisis, the debate was still emotional and was fought out over several days. Congress had divided itself over the decision to support Bush going to war not only along party lines, but by ideological and moral lines. In the Senate, Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) argued that the rush to war was unnecessary and explained that “a superpower has claws and has teeth. A superpower, as against this Third World power, does not have to be impatient or impetuous. A superpower does not have to feel rushed. We can afford to be patient and let sanctions work.”

According to Senator Byrd, the U.S. had witnessed the dismantlement of the Soviet Union through the application and dedication to sanctions and containment for forty years, and the Senator could not understand why, after only several months, sanctions against Iraq were already deemed a failure. Senator Claibourne Pell (D-RI), who had long attempted to restrict U.S. relations with Iraq because of human rights violations, shirked at the opportunity to confront Saddam Hussein. Now that the United Nations Security Council had implemented the sanctions that he had been calling for in the Senate, Senator Pell argued:

I believe sanctions will force Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait or, in the alternative, would eventually force the Iraqi people to replace Saddam Hussein. I concede, however, that sanctions might not produce an Iraqi withdrawal. If force does become necessary, I want our servicemen and women to enter battle facing the best possible odds. That is not the case now. But over time, I believe, sanctions will improve the odds in favor of our Armed Forces as compared with the degrading Iraqis military machine.

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Senator Pell and Senator Byrd’s attitudes were opposed by Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-N.Y), who had already publically stated his commitment to Bush’s stance on the Persian Gulf Crisis, and retorted:

I do not know when the United States needs its credibility more than now. It is not too late for us to give to our President that authority. I believe when he has that authority, we have a much better opportunity for ending this deadly undertaking without the use of force. If we want peace, let us give our President the ability to sustain and to make it known that he has the ability to carry out those promises and those undertakings, that he has made those assurances that he has given our allies and those warnings that he has given to our enemy.\(^\text{281}\)

As opposed to Senator Byrd, who argued that the U.S. could wait, and Senator Pell, who believed the United Nations Security Council had found a solution to the crisis, Senator D’Amato argued that the U.S. did not have the luxury to wait, and had to present a credible intention to use force.

In the House, the debate was just as fierce, and a second resolution appeared that demanded the president seek a Congressional declaration of war. However, the second resolution disappeared, despite the endorsement from house speaker Representative Tom Foley (D-WA).\(^\text{282}\) Despite the efforts of some Congressional members to impact Bush’s trajectory toward war, there were testaments of support, such as Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), who explained that the first resolution, calling for Congress to support the president, would give Bush credibility, and that “This infusion of credibility is needed now, not 6 months from now. To abandon the U.N. resolution, to abandon the President now, erodes, undermines, subverts any credibility we might have. It is backing down, it is retreat. It is like

\(^{281}\) Senator Alfonse D'Amato, War Means Death and Destruction, Congressional Record, January 10, 1991, S126.

\(^{282}\) Representative Tom Foley, The Situation in the Middle East, Congressional Record, January 12, 1991, H442.
paying a blackmailer. When does it end? It never ends.”

Representative Richard Schulze (R-PA) added in his own statement that “Twenty years from now, we may look back upon this crisis as the turning point toward world peace: where for the first time, the United Nations was truly united against aggression, murder and greed. We may remember this resolution as the day America proved its resolve to secure freedom for all the peoples of the world. The choice today is clear. We either vote to allow aggression and terrorism to go unchecked, or we vote for a new world order.”

The results of the debates were not resounding, but they were affirming. The Senate passed the resolution 52-47, while the House voted 250-183. The vote was an indication of the schism that had developed between Bush and his domestic audience because of his response to the budget crisis and mid-term elections.

Upon reflection, the trepidation with which Congress approached the vote to approve the use of force reinforced the pressure of domestic politics on foreign policy. Richard Haass explained that “those in the executive and legislative branches alike had their reasons for avoiding formal declarations of war: no president wanted to have his hands tied, and many in Congress did not want to give the president all the powers that accrue to him if war is formally declared. But neither did Congress want to give presidents a free hand.”

In the media, Charles Krauthammer offered a popular reflection of the consternation in Congress when he explained that the ideal solution to the Persian Gulf Crisis was impossible – “Stay out of war – and achieve our vital objectives.” Even Bush admitted that “in truth, even had Congress not passed the resolution I would have acted and ordered our troops into combat.”

However, the domestic origins of Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991

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283 Representative Henry Hyde, The Situation in the Middle East, Congressional Record, January 12, 1991, H392.
284 Representative Schulze, The Situation in the Middle East, Congressional Record, January 11, 1991, H199.
showed uncertainty in the conduct of foreign policy when it was played out in a domestic context.

As has been illustrated, domestic politics were not among Bush’s strengths, and the early approaches of the administration to moderating Saddam Hussein’s questionable behaviour quickly yielded to the requirement for a firm response that Bush believed would emerge the strongest from diplomacy. The bitter and divisive debate over the direction and application of American foreign policy reached its crescendo only months into Persian Gulf crisis when it became clear Bush would not openly discuss the administration’s decisions regarding Iraq. As a result, although Bush was prepared to battle for domestic authority until the last possible moment, he delays a debate in Congress to show domestic unity until only days before the beginning of hostilities against Iraq. Bush’s domestic hesitancy emerged from his primary concern that Saddam Hussein’s capabilities matched his intentions, and that by prolonging a domestic campaign to convince Congress, U.S. national interest would be put unnecessarily at risk. Therefore, the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 were protracted and divisive, resulting in a decision that cracked Bush’s domestic authority and threatened his domestic standing as president.
Chapter Four

The Diplomatic Origins of the Decision to Go to War with Iraq, 1989-1991

“January 13th [1991]: It is my decision to send these kids into battle, my decision that may affect the lives of innocence. It is my decision to step back and let sanctions work. Or to move forward. And in my view, help establish the New World Order…This man is evil, and let him win and we rise again to fight tomorrow…”

Not since President Dwight Eisenhower had the American people been able to vote for a president with the foreign policy credentials as George H. W. Bush. This chapter will explore the diplomatic origins of Bush’s decision to go to war by considering the inherited relationship with Iraq that emerged from Reagan’s administration. Assigning a low priority to the Persian Gulf, and believing the relationship with Saddam Hussein to be stable enough to continue building trade opportunities, U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie can be seen moderating the relationship from Baghdad. However, as the retreat of the Soviet Union creates a vortex of revolutionary forces in Eastern Europe, Saddam Hussein took the opportunity to test the limits of friendship with the U.S. and, in the act of consolidating regional power, annexed Kuwait. This aggression in a region dense with vital resources forced Bush to shift U.S. policy in the Middle East to a high priority, and the inherited relationship with Iraq was redefined by an approach that incorporated the international community, embracing a new internationalism that had emerged from the Cold War. With help from his advisers, Bush was able to corral and maintain an international consensus on

the Persian Gulf crisis for long enough to successfully implement international sanctions and deploy a defensive contingent of U.S. military forces to Saudi Arabia. Through the careful application of coercive diplomacy, both toward Iraq and toward other members of the United Nations for cooperation, Bush was granted United Nations authorisation for a military intervention in Kuwait to force out the entrenched Iraqi occupation. With the promise of forcing Iraq out of Kuwait by all means necessary, Bush approved one last diplomatic attempt to receive Iraqi capitulation. On January 15, Bush authorised the first airstrikes that began to force Iraq from Kuwait, the culmination of the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war against Iraq in 1991.

The Inherited Relationship with Iraq

In the last few months of Reagan’s presidency, in 1988, there was a chance to revise the U.S. position toward to the Middle East to better prepare the incoming administration, something that Reagan declined to do. It took well into Bush’s first year as president to revise U.S. policy toward the Middle East, and for the incoming administration to build upon the inherited relationship the U.S. had with Iraq. However, Reagan’s reluctance to confront Iraq was not without its own controversy. Iraq and Iran had been at war since 1980 and, although Iraq had agreed to a ceasefire with Iran in 1988, Iraq had proceeded with the Anfal military campaign against its local Kurdish population in northern Iraq, where it was reported that chemical weapons had been used. These rumours were considered serious enough that the Department of State sent an urgent cable to Ambassador April Glaspie at the Baghdad embassy requesting clarification. The request noted that Iraq appeared undeterred by international opinion against chemical weapons, and wanted to reinforce that the U.S. understood “that the situation is complex, with deep historical roots, and that it involves an armed rebellion in which Kurds allied themselves with Iran against the Iraqi Government...The campaign the Iraqi army is conducting against the Kurdish insurgency,
including the reported use of chemical weapons, is of deep concern to us.”

Ambassador Glaspie understood all too well that her role was to ensure Iraq maintained a suitable relationship with the U.S. because of its potential and strategic position in the Persian Gulf. However, this relationship depended on Iraq moderating its behaviour, so that it adhered to international norms of appropriateness. Ambassador Glaspie explained all this to Iraq’s Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Nazir Hamdun, and stressed that the U.S. desired to broaden and deepen its relationship with Iraq, but was held back by military expeditions such as the Anfal campaign. Under Secretary Hamdun, however, instead emphasised the importance of the Anfal campaign to Iraq, explaining that “there were areas of Kurdistan where the [Government of Iraq] had not extended its sovereignty,” and, therefore, the military campaign was an internal issue. One Kurdish leader, Jalal Talabani, had even “gone so far as to speak publically of disassociating the Kurds from the Iraqi state.”

But, the question of whether Iraq had deliberately used chemical weapons remained absent from the conversation between Ambassador Glaspie and Under Secretary Hamdun.

Congress, in an effort to assert itself on Persian Gulf policy, debated the Prevention of Genocide Act in September 1988 that demanded the administration cease its diplomatic relationship with Iraq and implement unilateral sanctions as a consequence of allegations of chemical weapons abuse. As the debate engulfed Congress, Ambassador Glaspie had to co-opt American broadcasts into her meetings around Baghdad. Ambassador Glaspie explained to Under Secretary Hamdun on September 10 that if the legislation were to successfully pass through Congress, the U.S. would require Saddam Hussein to certify that Iraq would not use chemical weapons, in order for the U.S. to continue a trade relationship. Although Hamdun avoided allegations that Iraq had used chemical weapons, he explained that he believed the Iraqi government “had said in the past it had not and would not use

[chemical weapons] in Kurdistan," and it was entirely possible that “civilian Kurds could easily mistake smoke bombs and other weapons for [chemical weapons].” 291 The muted response from Hamdun surprised Glaspie, who, in a brief cable to the State department, explained that “Hamdun stating that Iraq has not used and is not using lethal chemical weapons against the Kurds, and the remarkably moderate and mollifying mode of its presentation, leads us to conclude that Saddam Hussein has got the message and put a halt to the use of chemical weapons in Kurdistan.” 292 However, Ambassador Glaspie stressed that any moderate Iraqi attitudes were fleeting, and “Saddam is quite capable of losing his cool and authorising the kind of statements which will assuage his prickly pride but not serve Iraq’s own interest (and ours).” 293 It took only two days for Saddam to respond angrily, and publically, to the debate over the Prevention of Genocide Act that was played out in the U.S. Glaspie recorded that Saddam had given a fiery speech in which he explained the “uproar caused by the Americans” would not frighten him. Glaspie added, “[Saddam] warned that ‘the Senate may imagine that Iraq lives on the United States,’ but he strongly implied, as the press has suddenly begun to do, that Iraq can do without the United States altogether.” 294 Saddam, comfortable with his position in the Persian Gulf, was unfurling his intentions for the region.

It soon became clear to Ambassador Glaspie that there was a degree of truth in Saddam’s statements that Iraqi industry could function independently of U.S. assistance. In a meeting with representatives from the American engineering firm, Bechtel, Glaspie reported that Hussein Kamil, Saddam’s son-in-law and Minister of Industry, had told them that “a clear pattern of ‘Zionist undermining of Iraqi-U.S. relations’ is now apparent,” and “bemoaned the

291 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraqi CW Use: Ambassador’s Meeting with Hamdun,” September 10, 1988, paragraph 4-6.
292 Ibid. paragraph 9.
293 Ibid. paragraph 11.
294 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “After U.S. Actions, Saddam Changes His Tone,” September 12, 1990, paragraph 5.
fact that the U.S. would ‘mix politics with business’.” Glaspie explained that Kamil’s attitude was a good indication of Saddam’s because of their close relationship. Therefore, it could be tentatively concluded that Saddam was worried about any potential fallout that would affect U.S. and Iraqi business. The Bechtel representatives, however, were adamant that these political disagreements would not affect their business in Iraq. Although unilateral U.S. economic sanctions might inhibit American sources for their supplies, the Bechtel representatives explained that their multi-billion dollar construction projects in Iraq would continue, despite the sanctions, through international suppliers. The meeting with the Bechtel representatives only confirmed Glaspie’s previous thoughts that unilateral sanctions would be largely ineffective and only serve to damage U.S. interests.

In a meeting with Muhammad Mahdi al-Salih, Iraq’s Minister for Trade, Ambassador Glaspie was inclined to search for any indication that the debate in the U.S. was having a deeper effect on the Iraqi government. Minister Salih, after blaming Israel for the debate in the Senate, stressed that there was a commitment from Iraq to the U.S. for an improved trading relationship, pointing to a three-year-old Iraqi government decision to improve U.S. relations as an example of Iraq’s sincerity. According to Salih, “the rising trade statistics show that [government of Iraq] ministries and organisations implemented the decision.” Glaspie later noted that she was surprised at the change in Iraqi behaviour over the Prevention of Genocide Act. Glaspie described that when stripped of the threats, rhetoric, and public diatribes, the meeting with Minister Salih had occurred non-confrontationally and non-publically, a significant change from past Iraqi diplomatic behaviour. Approaching Under Secretary Hamdun later in September, Glaspie was assured that despite whatever shift she had detected in Iraqi diplomatic behaviour there would be no more discussion over the issue.

295 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Minister of Industry Blasts Senate Action,” September 13, 1988, paragraph 4-5.
296 Ibid. paragraph 6.
298 Ibid. paragraph 10.
of chemical weapons beyond the private assurances that Hamdun had already given. Instead, Hamdun criticised the U.S. for the mixed message conveyed by its public and diplomatic conduct, complaining that “[United States Government] demarches to the [Government of Iraq] focus on assurances, yet the [United States Government] is clearly centering its public diplomacy on ‘punishment of Iraq’ for alleged past use.” However, Hamdun’s criticism fell away, and Ambassador Glaspie moved on to different matters, as Reagan threatened to veto the Prevention from Genocide Act, citing the ineffective nature of unilateral sanctions for confronting international issues, and putting an end to the public debate.

Iraq wasted no time moving on from the agitation stirred by Prevention of Genocide Act and hurried to conclude hostilities with Iran in order to divert precious resources towards reconstructing Iraq’s industrial capacity. Ambassador Glaspie had the opportunity to witness this commitment first hand when she attended a presentation of the current and future potential of Iraqi industry aimed at diplomatic representatives in October. Glaspie noted that although the majority of goods were mostly assembled from imported materials, the viewing was impressive, and there were indications “that Iraq may be establishing a solid industrial base for post-war military and civilian production.” Iraq continued to display its investment potential the following month at the Baghdad international trade fair, where “Minister of Trade Salih, responsible for both the fair and the Agricultural negotiations, initiated a sustained positive series of public messages of Iraq’s satisfaction with the course of our bilateral relationship.” With the debate in Congress swept aside, Minister Salih was hopeful for “the establishment of broad commercial relations” through “burgeoning Iraqi

300 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraqi Industrial Production,” October 11, 1988, paragraph 1.
construction contracts."\(^{302}\) Glaspie noticed the convenient timing of Iraq's overtures for U.S. investment, explaining that "There is a genuine desire for a closer working relationship with the [United States Government], not least to remind the Soviets that the Iraqis have other political options." It was obvious that Iraq was strategically positioned in the Persian Gulf and, although Iraq was attempting to twist relations in their favour, any U.S. engagement with Iraq meant that Glaspie was in a better position to moderate Iraqi behaviour towards chemical weapons long term.\(^{303}\) A first step of this new, moderated relationship was Iraq's attendance at a conference in Paris in December condemning the use of Chemical weapons.

Bush's inauguration as president in January 1989, only increased Iraqi efforts to promote the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq, showing its potential industrial capacity in order to secure greater income to pay off its considerable international debt racked up over eight years of escalating war production. It was apparent to Ambassador Glaspie, however, that no matter how much investment Iraq gained, much of its economic recovery was based on the predictions of stabilised oil prices.\(^{304}\) That did not deter U.S. businesses from looking for opportunities in Iraq. Two prominent U.S. firms, Lummus and Kellogg, had both lodged significant bids in large Iraqi petrochemical contracts,\(^{305}\) and Saddam Hussein had personally encouraged more U.S. investment in an address at the U.S.-Iraq Business forum in June. Glaspie noted that the chairman of the First City Bank of Texas, A. Robert Abboud, pointed out that the U.S. business delegation "represented U.S. banking, oil, construction, and food production sectors, and their total worth would make them the third largest

\(^{302}\) Ibid. paragraph 6.

\(^{303}\) Ibid. paragraph 7.

\(^{304}\) Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, "U.S.-Iraq Trade, Finance, and Industrial Development Issues," March 30, 1989, paragraph 1.

\(^{305}\) Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, "EXIM Medium-Term Credit Guarantees," May 21, 1989, paragraph 4-5.
economy in the free world.” Basking in the reflection of gathered wealth, Saddam assured the business representatives that he was personally committed to improving the relationship with the U.S., and “that no matter what may occur (a reference to the sanctions issue) we [have] personally made a decision to ‘cooperate with you’, and this decision ‘will not be shaken’.” Glaspie, remaining sceptical of Saddam’s positive gestures, noted that the Soviet Union had also recently decided to sell arms to Iran and that “pleased as we are, and pleased as many private and public Iraqis were (Tariq Aziz being among the most pleased) at the success of the visit, we believe an important factor in Saddam’s decision to roll out the Ba’athi red carpet for American bankers and capitalists was the [Government of Iraq’s] mounting anger at Soviet arms sales to Iran.” Glaspie also noted that although Saddam’s decision-making was heavily weighted in his favour, there were no doubts that Iraq had a fertile industrial base that was alluring to U.S. investors. According to representatives from Volvo and General Motors, who were competing for a contract to manufacture heavy-duty vehicles in Iraq, they were astounded to find an industrial capacity far more advanced than their estimates. Both companies had been granted access to a number of factories in Southern Iraq and had been impressed “not just [with] the acquisition of sophisticated technology, but [also] the ability to absorb it.” Despite how obvious it was that Saddam was attempting to consolidate Iraq as a regional power, and that the U.S. would fund such an endeavour, it was equally obvious that there was the potential for a lucrative relationship with a stable Iraq.

Reflecting on the U.S. relationship with Iraq in 1989, Secretary of State James A. Baker III admitted that Iraq was not an urgent priority, as the new administration was grappling with

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307 Ibid. paragraph 8.
308 Ibid. paragraph 21.
309 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraqi Industrial Base,” July 5, 1989, paragraph 4
revolution occurring in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{310} This meant that Ambassador Glaspie was left to ponder, in August, the current political status of Iraq and what could be expected in the immediate future. Concerned about Iraq’s ability to repay its international debts, Glaspie reported that Deputy Prime Minister and economic/financial supervisor, Sadoun Hammadi, had explained to her that “Iraq should have substantially paid its debts and be ready to return to cash on the barrel head ‘in five or six years, we hope’.”\textsuperscript{311} Glaspie was assured that the U.S. would retain its preferential payment status, and that would mean Iraq would never renege on its debt repayments to the U.S. This same assurance, however, was not given to other foreign investors, leaving open the possibility that should Iraq feel the U.S. was inhibiting a healthy trade relationship the repayments might be rescheduled. In a moment of hopeful prescience, Glaspie stressed to the State department the importance of maintaining a beneficial economic relationship with Iraq as it provided the necessary diplomatic leverage to moderate Iraqi behaviour should Saddam attempt to cause trouble in the Persian Gulf. According to Glaspie, the economic relationship was in the U.S. favour, as “Reneging on existing debt to the [United States Government] would run counter to the major effort, publically sponsored by Saddam himself, to establish an ongoing working relationship with the new American administration.”\textsuperscript{312} The unpredictable, and ongoing, concern for Glaspie was the unstable price of oil that dictated how quickly Iraq could repay its debts and rebuild its industrial capacity. This meant that Iraq’s economy was intrinsically connected to price fluctuations in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) pricing index, set by the oil-producing Persian Gulf nations. Glaspie had already seen the potential signs of a confrontation in the region as Iraq’s Minister for Finance had “strongly hinted to the ambassador…that debts to Arabs will not be paid.”\textsuperscript{313} In the opinion of Saddam Hussein Iraq

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\textsuperscript{311} Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Assessment of Iraqi Credit Worthiness,” August 2, 1989, paragraph 3.
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\textsuperscript{312} Ibid. paragraph 12.
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\textsuperscript{313} Ibid. paragraph 17.
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had held off a Persian expansion into the Persian Gulf by waging war against Iran for eight years. Therefore, any debt that was owed to Arab states, particularly Kuwait, was regarded by Iraq as protection money. Despite what had been promised from a continuing relationship between the U.S. and Iraq, Saddam would soon test the limits of U.S. diplomacy.

**Saddam Tests His Friendship**

National Security Directive 26, published on October 2, 1989, added little to the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq that Bush had inherited from Reagan. The directive reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to “defend its vital interests in the region, if necessary and appropriate through the use of U.S. military force, against the Soviet Union or any other regional power with interests inimical to our own.”\(^{314}\) The directive added that the Secretary of Defence would have approval to reduce military deployments if required, and that the U.S. would sell military equipment to allies in the region so long as those sales did not present a threat to Israel. On Iraq, the directive specified that “the United States Government should propose economic and political incentives for Iraq to moderate its behaviour and to increase our influence with Iraq,” stressing that Iraq was on notice for its alleged use of chemical and biological weapons. This did not, however, inhibit suggestions that the United States should sell Iraq non-lethal forms of military assistance.\(^{315}\) According to National Security Council Adviser Richard Haass, the document was “a classic case of constructive engagement, a policy of trying to build bridges with a country that was an adversary or at least a problem in the hope of moderating its behaviour. But it was also an example of conditional engagement, since it emphasized that normalization would not go ahead if Iraq acted in ways contrary to U.S. interests.”\(^{316}\) Secretary Baker added, “It was well worth exploring the possibility that better relations might stem nuclear proliferation, bring economic benefits, and enhance


\(^{315}\) Ibid.

prospects for Arab-Israeli peace.” More broadly, the status quo in the Middle East remained.

It was a surprise when, coinciding with the newly revised position of the United States in the Persian Gulf, allegations surfaced suggesting that the Banca Nazione Del Lavro (BNL), a state-owned Italian bank, had extended a line of non-approved loans to Iraq through an American branch of the bank. The allegations were enough to influence debate in Congress over the extension of agricultural loans to Iraq through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) that guaranteed the export of American agricultural equipment to Iraq. With the economic relationship between Iraq and the U.S. threatened by allegations of financial fraud, Secretary Baker was quick to assure his counterpart in Iraq, Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, that there was no deliberate effort by the U.S. to destabilize Iraq, and the impending investigation would not threaten established CCC credit guarantees. In response, Aziz quickly refuted any complicity in the scandal. Ambassador Glaspie noted that the BNL allegations had sent shockwaves through the Iraqi trade community and reported that Minister Salih, at a diplomatic convention in October, had stressed that “Iraq is not in any way culpable in the [BNL] scandal.” Salih warned that stalled CCC negotiations risked creating the impression that “the [United States Government] has decided or suspects that Iraq is in some way involved. Such a perception will be damaging for Iraq.” Glaspie did her best to salve the wounds that were opened as a result of the BNL scandal, and assured Salih that “there is no intention on the [United States Government] side to infer Iraqi involvement in the BNL issue.” Despite the BNL allegations, Secretary Baker advised the Department of Agriculture to approve the full CCC credit program, adhering to the conditions of the economic relationship between the U.S. and Iraq stressed in National Security Directive 26. On November 29, any sign that the BNL scandal had affected U.S.-Iraq

318 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Tariq Aziz’ Reply to Secretary’s Letter October 24”, 1989.
319 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “CCC Negotiations,” circa October 1989, paragraph 4.
320 Ibid. paragraph 8.
relations was almost non-existent as the Joint Chiefs circulated a proposal extending non-lethal military assistance to Iraq. Adding to National Security Directive 26, the Joint Chiefs believed that through training schemes and exchange programs, the “implementation of low-level, non-lethal military assistance would greatly facilitate developing an improved dialogue with and access to the senior military leadership and the government of Iraq.”  

However, Congress was proving to be an inconvenience in the diplomatic exchange between Iraq and the U.S., moving to suspend the remaining CCC loans to Iraq pending a final review of the BNL investigation. Glaspie was immediately bombarded with arguments that the suspension of the loans would destabilise Iraq, and that “forces within the [Government of Iraq] who seek to undermine improving U.S.–Iraq relations may use this offending legislation as leverage with President Saddam.” The State Department was already aware that the suspension of loans was problematic, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Edward Gnehm, admitted to Glaspie that the U.S. had unwittingly diminished Iraq’s international economic credibility. Glaspie was told that Secretary Baker had already agreed with Aziz in October that “our agricultural policy must not be hostage to other problems; since there is no evidence that the [Government of Iraq] was involved in wrongdoing on BNL, a full program of CCC in the billion dollar range should be offered to Iraq.” It was imperative that the U.S. resumed its only meaningful economic connection to Iraq in order to maintain some semblance of influence. On January 17, 1990, Bush, in an effort to correct the imbalance in the economic relationship with Iraq, ignored Congressional opposition to sign almost $200 million of Export-Import Bank credit for agricultural loans to Iraq, marking the administration’s commitment to its relationship with Iraq.

The Iraqi response to the Export-Import Bank loans, despite the intended purpose of reassuring Iraqi industry, was not positive. Iraq’s central bank director, talking with

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322 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “U.S. Legislation Suspending EXIM Credits to Iraq,” December 11, 1989, paragraph 3.
323 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “DAS Gnehm Call on Minister of Trade – CCC and BNL,” December 10, 1989, paragraph 5.
Ambassador Glaspie, argued that the loans had been significantly lowered, and that “We should be talking billions, not millions and it [the credit] should be medium term.”\textsuperscript{324} The director could not believe that the administration would bend before Congressional opposition and blamed Israeli pressure for blocking loans to Iraq, explaining to the ambassador that “I was there and I could feel it.”\textsuperscript{325} According to Glaspie, the meeting was a good example of Iraqi grievances in the wake of the BNL scandal and she wrote that “the current official carrot-and-stick line…you want to be friends; you want to be partners, medium-term exim loans would generate a high volume of trade and goodwill.”\textsuperscript{326} Despite the importance of a stable economic relationship with Iraq, Congressional negotiations over the loans crawled through March because of the lingering doubts over the Iraqi government’s complicity in the BNL scandal.\textsuperscript{327} The negotiations faced another setback when, at the end of March, Iraqi exporters were uncovered attempting to smuggle items into Iraq that were on an export control list. The electronic triggers that had been seized were believed to have a dual-use in nuclear weaponry. When Glaspie met with Under Secretary Hamdun to explain the U.S. concerns, she was met with immediate renunciations of Iraqi complicity. Hamdun explained that “[a group of people, not Iraqi citizens, were running an unwise or illegal operation in the hope of pleasing someone in Iraq; although the [Government of Iraq] knew nothing, it smelled something was wrong and suspected entrapment.”\textsuperscript{328} Iraqi excuses were becoming familiar to Glaspie.

Under Secretary Hamdun further argued that the banned items were inconsequential, and that those who were arrested were not technically Iraqi, reassuring Ambassador Glaspie that

\textsuperscript{325} Ibid. paragraph 5.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid. paragraph 9.
\textsuperscript{327} Briefing Memo for the Under Secretary, “Your Meeting with April C. Glaspie, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, on Friday, March 15 at 9:00 PM,” Department of Agriculture, March 14, 1990; State Department Memo, “Amb. Glaspie’s Meeting with under Secretary Crowder,” March 16, 1990.
\textsuperscript{328} Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Smuggled Electrical Components: Iraq Asserts Innocence,” April 1, 1990 paragraph 16.
there were intercepted telexes that proved Iraqi innocence and showed that Iraq had been framed. However, on April 2, Saddam Hussein gave an address to the General Command of his armed forces that scuttled Hamdun’s efforts at mediation with the U.S. Saddam confirmed that he had chemical weapons and vowed that if Iraq were attacked by Israel, then “By God, we will make fire eat up half of Israel.” According to Secretary Baker, it was at this point that the strategic calculation involving Iraq was irrevocably changed.\textsuperscript{329} Worrying that the U.S. was on a collision course with Iraq, a Senate delegation that was in Iraq to meet with Saddam was used as an intermediary and barometer for the viability of any continuing relationship. Despite being briefed on Iraq’s recent behaviour by the State Department, the meeting was deemed a success. The Senators all returned to the U.S., announcing “that Saddam was a leader with whom the United States could work with.”\textsuperscript{330} Secretary Baker, however, remained concerned of the accumulating Iraqi transgressions, and after recounting every issue that had developed since the U.S. and Iraq first expressed their desire for a mutually beneficial relationship in late 1989, to Glaspie, pointed out that “Iraq is now a major regional power and should act in the responsible way such a role requires.”\textsuperscript{331} It was becoming clear that the Administration was losing influence in Iraq.

Making matters worse in April was the interception of engineered pipes by British authorities that were assumed to be part of the construction of a large gun barrel. In response, the state-owned Iraqi media immediately claimed, “the latest British charges are part of the British-American-Zionist campaign against Iraq and reflect a fear in the west of technological development in Arab countries.”\textsuperscript{332} However, the public broadcast was seen by Ambassador Glaspie to be an appeal to Arab support as it referred to “Iraq as the surrogate for the Arab nation and as the innocent and wronged object of a western-Zionist conspiracy to withhold

\textsuperscript{330} Ibid. 269.
\textsuperscript{331} Cable from State Department to Baghdad Embassy, “Tensions in U.S. – Iraqi Relations,” April 12, 1990, paragraph 4.
\textsuperscript{332} Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraq Protests its Innocence,” April 15, 1990, paragraph 1.
high technology (read progress), it has given voice to a deep Arab resentment.”

Glaspie, in a cable briefing Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs John Kelly before he testified before a Congressional sub-committee that was exploring the U.S. relationship with Iraq, stressed that “Iraq is too big and too dangerous to ignore.” Jaw, jaw, went on Glaspie, is better than war, war. However, Glaspie admitted that Iraqi negotiations had been affected by the hardening relationship between Washington and Baghdad. Glaspie explained that Iraq was taking each negotiation to the edge, and that they would “make no concessions unless it is apparent that there is an imminent breakdown in the negotiations.”

On May 1, in his testimony before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, Secretary Baker added his own opposition to unilateral sanctions suggested by various Congressional representatives because of the detrimental effects they would have on diplomatic conduct. However, Secretary Baker’s efforts would lead to nought, and by May 29, after updates on the CCC and BNL investigations, there was unanimous agreement among the deputies committee to suspend all economic credit programs with Iraq.

Responding to the suspension of loans, Iraq removed the U.S. from preferential payment status for debt repayments, and Saddam Hussein personally denounced the U.S. decision, declaring that all U.S. agricultural imports would be suspended immediately. Ambassador Glaspie attempted to salvage what little remained of the economic relationship between the U.S. and Iraq by reassuring Minister Salih that the decision to defer credit loans not did stem from a general U.S.-Iraq dispute. It was because of legal, not political, concerns that the programs had to be suspended. Salih, in response, explained that even a deferment had to

334 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Hamilton Subcommittee,” April 25, 1990, paragraph 3.
335 Ibid. paragraph 2.
337 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Public Iraqi Gesture toward the USG,” July 3, 1990.
338 Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraq Minister of Trade/Finance Discusses USDA GSM Credit Guarantee Program,” July 9, 1990, paragraph 13.
be understood as a decision regarding the extension of loans, and that meant Iraq would have no choice but to renegotiate debt repayments. In the wake of Saddam’s threat to suspend U.S. agricultural imports, international exporters rushed to fill the gaps and, on July 12, Glaspie reported that Australia and Canada had increased wheat exports as a result of the U.S. absence, while rice imports were sourced from Thailand and Vietnam, eliminating the largest U.S. export market for rice.\textsuperscript{339} However, Iraq’s financial situation hit a crisis point on July 25 at an OPEC meeting to set oil prices among the Persian Gulf States. The focus of the meeting was an argument between Iraq and Kuwait regarding the overproduction of oil and claims to oil wells along their shared, disputed border. It was apparent that Iraq had committed to securing concessions from Kuwait by demanding a pledge not to overproduce oil and a cash advance.\textsuperscript{340} A public information campaign was also conducted by Iraq to coincide with the meeting that appealed to Arab support by attempting to link Kuwait to an imperialist plot conducted by the U.S.\textsuperscript{341} Amidst the noise created by Iraq in the lead-up to the meeting, embassy observers reported a troop deployment along the Kuwaiti border that was initially ignored, believed to be limited in scope, and “for the political purpose of keeping the heat on Kuwait and...the pressure on Arab mediators in the run up to the July 25 OPEC meeting.”\textsuperscript{342} Kuwait did not help diplomatically when, on July 22, reports suggested that there had been negotiations between Kuwait and Iran to open a direct sea-lane while ignoring Iraqi attempts at opening an air corridor with Basra.\textsuperscript{343} Kuwait understood all too well that it was dangerous to overtly cooperate with Iran, and Glaspie noted that “neighboring posts, including Riyadh and Amman, are emphasising the general Arab support for Saddam’s goals, but not, of course, for his methods.”\textsuperscript{344}

\textsuperscript{339} Cable from Baghad Embasy to State Department, “CCC Freeze: Displacement of American Products Begins,” July 12, 1990, paragraph 3-4.
\textsuperscript{340} Cable from Baghad Embasy to State Department, “Kuwait: Iraq Keeps up the pressure,” July 22, 1990, paragraph 3.
\textsuperscript{341} Ibid. paragraph 4.
\textsuperscript{342} Ibid. paragraph 20.
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid. paragraph 21.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid. paragraph 25.
Iraqi public information campaign became more audacious, casting the Kuwaiti foreign minister as an American agent. The silence that descended over the Arab diplomatic community gave no indication of any further efforts to mediate Iraq.\(^{345}\)

Saddam Hussein took a break from negotiations with OPEC in July and invited Ambassador Glaspie to a meeting to discuss the Iraqi relationship with the U.S. Saddam told Glaspie, in a one-on-one meeting, that Iraq wanted friendship with the U.S. However, Saddam claimed that there were some within the U.S. government that were set on disrupting Iraqi reconstruction, and Iraq needed a Marshall plan to aid its recovery rather than a vendetta against himself and his country.\(^{346}\) Saddam Hussein stressed to Glaspie that the economic situation in Iraq was exacerbated by other Persian Gulf states who had been flouting oil prices at the expense of Iraq’s national income. According to Saddam, “Those who force oil prices down are engaging in economic warfare and Iraq cannot accept such a trespass on its dignity and prosperity.”\(^{347}\) Saddam then complained that the U.S. had implicitly aided those states in their unfair oil pricing tactics by agreeing to perform naval manoeuvres in the Persian Gulf with the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Saddam left no doubt that he would act to protect Iraq’s integrity and security should they be threatened, warning Glaspie “that the [United States Government] not force Iraq to the point of humiliation at which logic must be disregarded.”\(^{348}\) Despite these grievances, Saddam conceded that although Bush had been a friend, he was worried by the serious effects the over production of oil was having on the Iraqi economy. In response, Glaspie explained that her role was to strengthen and deepen the U.S. relationship with Iraq. She stressed “President Bush, too, wants friendship,”\(^{349}\) and this was evident in Bush’s continued opposition to Congressional

\(^{345}\) Cable from Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Iraq/Kuwait: On the Eve of OPEC Meeting,” July 24, 1990.

\(^{346}\) Cable From Baghdad Embassy to State Department, “Saddam’s Message of Friendship to President Bush,” July 25, 1990.

\(^{347}\) Ibid. paragraph 8.

\(^{348}\) Ibid. paragraph 14.

\(^{349}\) Ibid. paragraph 21.
demands for unilateral sanctions on Iraq. Glaspie explained that there had to be a peaceful solution to the disagreement between the Persian Gulf states regarding oil prices for the sake of regional security, something that was a vital interest to the U.S. However, Iraqi troops at Kuwait’s border and public broadcasts accusing the Kuwait government of aggression compelled Glaspie to ask “is it not reasonable for us to ask in the spirit of friendship, not confrontation, the simple question: What are your intentions?”\textsuperscript{350} Saddam responded that everything had already been tried in order to settle the price of oil, but because Kuwait was non-cooperative and the United Arab Emirates had endorsed “bad statements,” there were not many options remaining.\textsuperscript{351} At this point the meeting was interrupted by an urgent phone call from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. When Saddam returned, Glaspie inquired as to what the phone call was about, and Saddam explained that the Kuwaitis were willing to negotiate, but no later than July 30. Saddam said “I told Mubarak that nothing will happen until the meeting, and nothing will happen during or after the meeting if the Kuwaitis will at last give us some hope.”\textsuperscript{352} Glaspie replied that this news would be reported immediately to Bush.

The State Department had already sent a brief to all Middle Eastern embassies on July 19 updating the policy regarding the U.S. position on Iraq-Kuwait affairs. Secretary Baker recalled that “American diplomats were instructed to stress two points. First, ‘disputes should be settled by peaceful means, not intimidation and threats of use of force. Second, the United States takes no position on the substance of bilateral issues concerning Iraq and Kuwait. However, U.S. policy is unchanged. We remain committed to ensure the free flow of oil from the Gulf and to support the sovereignty and integrity of the Gulf states…we will continue to defend our vital interest in the Gulf.”\textsuperscript{353} Although Ambassador Glaspie had

\begin{footnotes}
\item[350] Ibid. paragraph 24.
\item[351] Ibid. paragraph 26.
\item[352] Ibid. paragraph 28.
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followed her brief, she noted after the meeting that Saddam was worried. In Glaspie’s opinion, Saddam understood that the U.S. was the only superpower in the Middle East, and “he needs at a minimum a correct relationship with us for obvious geopolitical reasons.” Although U.S. naval exercises with the UAE had worried Saddam, Glaspie had assured Saddam that the U.S. was not in the Middle East to take sides. In fact, Glaspie reiterated the new U.S. policy on Iraq-Kuwait affairs by stating that “she had served in Kuwait 20 years before; then, as now, we took no position on these Arab affairs.” According to Glaspie:

> It was progress to have Saddam admit that the [United States Government] has a ‘responsibility’ in the region, and has every right to expect an answer when we ask Iraq’s intentions. His response in effect that he tried various diplomatic/channels before resorting to unadulterated intimidation has at least the virtue of frankness. His emphasis that he wants peaceful settlement is surely sincere (Iraqis are sick of war), but the terms sound difficult to achieve.

Despite Iraqi troops mobilised at the Kuwaiti border and the bellicose language from the Iraqi regime, Ambassador Glaspie had done all that was diplomatically possible in her meeting with Saddam, and as a result the consensus was that Iraqi behaviour was a minor regional dispute between Kuwait and Iraq. Richard Haass later admitted that “statements by various administration officials that we had no formal alliance commitment to Kuwait were unfortunate and may have reinforced [the perception that the United States would not get involved]. And nearly all of us were wrong in discounting the possibility that Saddam might invade Kuwait as he did.” On August 1, intelligence reports updated their warnings from “warning of war” to “warning of attack,” and it was now obvious that Saddam would make

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355 Ibid.
356 Ibid. paragraph 30.
357 Ibid. paragraph 32.
358 Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 58.
good on his threats toward Kuwait. On August 2, 1990, the Iraqi military crossed the Kuwait border.

**Changing the Approach to Iraq**

With the breakdown of the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq a diplomatic response was required from Bush, and his first reaction was to freeze all of Kuwait's assets in the U.S. The worst case scenario was confirmed when, at the behest of the U.S., the United Nations Security Council convened at 4:45am in New York City to denounce the act of aggression in a hope that it might dissuade Saddam Hussein from remaining in Kuwait. Kuwait's Ambassador, Mohammad Abdullah Abulhasan, took the opportunity to detail the extent of the crisis, explaining:

> Iraq occupied Kuwait at dawn today. The Iraqi forces have penetrated and occupied ministries, and the headquarters of the Government has been shelled. Crossroads have been occupied. A short time ago, Baghdad Radio announced that the aim of the invasion of Kuwait is to stage a coup d'état to overthrow the regime and establish a new regime and a Government friendly to Iraq.\(^{359}\)

Ambassador Abulhasan warned that “No country will be safe after this,”\(^{360}\) and demanded that the Security Council take action to ensure the peace and security of a region that contained vital resources. However, Iraq’s deputy Ambassador, Sabah Kadrat, was dismissive of Abulhasan’s claims, warning the Security Council not to intervene. Working through a list of reasons that clarified the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Kadrat explained that the matters in Kuwait were internal, Iraq had no ulterior motives in Kuwait, and that if the U.S. felt it was necessary to intervene it would be used as evidence of collusion with Kuwait to

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\(^{360}\) Ibid.
influence politics in the Persian Gulf. Although Iraq expected the U.S. to intervene in some way because of its commitment to the Persian Gulf, Saddam Hussein was confident that this would emerge in the shape of unilateral action because of the established ineptitude of the Security Council when faced with a decision. More important, Saddam assumed that his annexation of Kuwait was a non-issue. This time, however, things were different. United States Ambassador Thomas Pickering was scathing in his denunciation of the Iraqi invasion and dismissed Kadrat’s explanation by noting that “Instead of staging their coup d’état and installing this so-called free provisional government before the invasion, they got it the wrong way around: they invaded Kuwait and then staged the coup d’état in a blatant and deceitful effort to justify their action.”

Pickering was clear that the U.S. condemned the use of force by Iraq and that any response would reflect United Nations Security Council consensus, despite admitting that “The Security Council has seldom faced a more blatant use of force.” However, it was imperative that “the Council…accept its full responsibilities and to support Kuwait in its hour of need…The world is now watching what we do here and will not be satisfied with vacillation or procrastination.”

Bush had made a clear stand in the United Nations Security Council in opposition to Iraq’s actions.

All five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, in an unprecedented step, agreed to condemn Iraq’s use of force. Where disagreement remained was not in the process of condemning Iraqi aggression but in the substance. France’s Ambassador Pierre-Louis Blanc, explained that France “welcomed the efforts at Arab mediation and the holding of a first-round meeting at Jiddah between the two parties. In fact, we believe that dialogue is the only possible means for resolving the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait.”

Whereas the United Kingdom’s Ambassador, Sir Crispin Tickell, sided with Ambassador Pickering to argue that Saddam’s expansion in a region that was dense with a vital resource echoed the

363 Ibid. 17.
steps of totalitarianism in the past. Tickell suggested, contrary to Ambassador Blanc, that “The Security Council represents the focus of world opinion,” and unified action was necessary. Ambassadors from the Soviet Union and China both agreed that Iraq should unconditionally and immediately withdraw their forces from Kuwait, but added that this would have to be achieved by resuming regional dialogue between Iraq and Kuwait, preferably lead by the Arab states. However, all the permanent members agreed that Iraqi aggression had to be reversed in order to restore stability to the Persian Gulf. The result of the emergency session on August 2 was Security Council resolution 660, enshrining the international demand that Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait. According to Secretary Baker, securing United Nations Security Council consensus was central to the crisis response planning of the administration. Secretary Baker explained that there were three stages to rectifying Iraq’s invasion that shifted from coalition building to coercive diplomacy - “We would begin with diplomatic pressure, then add economic pressure, to a great degree organized through the United Nations, and finally move toward military pressure by gradually increasing American troop strength in the Gulf. The strategy was to lead a global political alliance aimed at isolating Iraq.”364 The immediate reaction of condemnation by the U.S. of Iraqi aggression rewrote the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq, and a different approach had emerged that relied on the international community.

With the condemnation of Saddam Hussein’s decision to annex Iraq enshrined in a United Nations Security Council resolution, the U.S. pushed for a more nuanced response to the crisis in the Persian Gulf. After a series of National Security Council meetings, Richard Haass noted that U.S. policy was consolidating on a direction to take in the Persian Gulf, despite some initial reluctance to confront Saddam from Chairman Powell, who had questioned, in an early National Security Council session, if it was worth going to war over Kuwait.365 Haass had been unimpressed by the attitude of the initial National Security

Council meetings and, in a memo drafted for Bush at the request of National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, concluded that “the strategic price of allowing Iraq to keep Kuwait would be enormous, and that evicting Iraq would likely require the use of military force on our part.”\(^{366}\) In the memo, Haass explained “I am aware as you are of just how costly and risky such a conflict would prove to be. But so too would be accepting this new status quo. We would be setting a terrible precedent – one that would only accelerate violent centrifugal tendencies – in this emerging ‘post-cold war’ era.”\(^{367}\) This meant building on the consensus in the United Nations Security Council to develop measures that would pressure Iraq, and on August 6, the United Nations Security Council reconvened to draft sanctions to be imposed on Iraq under resolution 661. Ambassador Pickering was predictably emphatic that the Security Council implement a strong sanctions regime.\(^{368}\) The sanctions were justified, according to Pickering, because “Thirty percent of the region’s oil production is now under Iraqi control, thus threatening international economic health and stability.”\(^{369}\) At this point Pickering took the opportunity to expand the U.S. vision for the United Nations Security Council, stressing that the implementation of sanctions would “reflect a new world order of international co-operation in the Council and elsewhere.”\(^{370}\) More important, the sanctions would have more success if applied multilaterally, as opposed to unilaterally.

Of course, the sanctions regime was a reflection of the practical steps that were already being taken in the White House to ensure Iraq would leave Kuwait. In the interlude between resolution 660 and 662, Secretary Baker had already moved to ensure that Saudi Arabia would allow a preliminary 100,000 American troops to form a defensive barrier on its border with Iraq in preparation for the possibility that military force might be used to push Iraq from


\(^{367}\) Ibid.

\(^{368}\) Twelve European Council members had, only one day prior, implemented their own unilateral embargoes on oil from Iraq and Kuwait alongside sanctions on economic and co-operative measures with Iraq. United Nations Security Council Meeting, Document Number S/PV.2933, August 6, 1990, 21.


\(^{370}\) Ibid. 17.
Indeed, the rush to secure the defensive line across Saudi Arabia’s shared border with Iraq was formed almost immediately after the invasion of Kuwait. Saudi Ambassador Bandar Bin Sultan was personally assured by Bush, after rushing back from London to the U.S. after hearing the news of the Kuwaiti invasion, that the U.S. would do whatever was necessary to protect Saudi Arabia. Bush promised “I give my word of honor…I will see this through with you.” The implications of this troop deployment was obvious to the smaller states at the Security Council, and Cuba’s Ambassador Alarcon de Quesada expressed his scepticism toward the proposed sanctions, arguing that they would “facilitate the interventionist actions taking place in the region and openly promoted and proclaimed by the United States Government.” Alarcon warned that the Security Council was being used to legitimate the unilateral actions of the U.S., and wondered “whether anyone really believes that what we have here is also the expression of a change, of something new in international life.” Yemen’s Ambassador Abdullah Saleh al-Ashtal agreed with Alarcon, reassuring the Security Council that Yemen had taken steps to correct the crisis in the Persian Gulf “within the framework of the one Arab family in a way that would consolidate Arab solidarity, keep the region free from foreign intervention, guarantee the consolidation of national Arab security, and spare it from danger.”

Ambassador al-Ashtal stressed that the crisis would be resolved through a regional solution, and that this could not be imposed from outside the Persian Gulf because “In the normal course, this conflict will eventually come to an end, and we hope that the confrontation in the area will also.” Despite these concerns, the Security Council agreed to implement sanctions on Iraq that were based on the condition of immediate and unconditional

374 Ibid. 38.
375 Ibid. 51.
376 Ibid. 52.
withdrawal from Kuwait. Secretary Baker recalled that it was thanks to the coercive diplomacy of the U.S. that consensus was achieved, explaining that there were two steps to securing Security Council approval on resolutions. First, was to play hardball with the permanent five states that held veto powers. Second, was to corral the smaller states that had votes up for grabs. Secretary Baker went straight to the point, explaining that “As communism collapsed, America’s status as the preeminent superpower was magnified. As a result, everyone wanted to get closer to the United States. This gave us formidable leverage, which we didn’t hesitate to wield throughout the crisis.”

The crisis in the Persian Gulf, however, was far from resolved. There was one additional milestone necessary for the coercive diplomatic approach toward Iraq to be codified through the United Nations Security Council, and this required an agreement on an enforcement mechanism for a breach in the sanctions regime. Richard Haass noted that diplomatic manoeuvring had produced a suitable short-term plan, but that plan was not politically sustainable as “the consensus was that we needed some mechanism or new development to use force and that we couldn’t just one day announce we’d grown tired of waiting. What this trigger would be was not clear, especially as Saddam played it smart and did not do something that provoked outrage.” This meant a return to the United Nations Security Council on August 25 to confer on a resolution that would add an enforcement mechanism to the sanctions. The proposal incorporated a naval embargo of ships destined to and from Kuwait and Iraq, taking advantage of the U.S. naval forces that were already in position in the Persian Gulf. The resolution called upon those “co-operating with the Government of Kuwait which are deploying maritime forces to the area to use such measures commensurate to the specific circumstances as may be necessary under the authority of the Security Council to halt all inward and outward maritime shipping.”

Ambassador Pickering was adamant that “the authority granted in this resolution is

sufficiently broad to use armed force – indeed, minimum force – depending upon the circumstances which might require it. This is a significant step.”

And this indicated that the Security Council was prepared “to confront Iraq’s wanton aggression and to preserve the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. History will judge us by our resolve in the face of Iraq’s threats to international peace and security.”

Despite U.S. confidence in its understanding of the resolution, China’s Ambassador Li Daoyu was not convinced by Pickering’s observations, and stated that China would “hold that measures must be taken within the framework of resolution 661 (1990), which does not provide for the use of force, and will naturally not allow force to be used for its implementation.”

Despite the different interpretations, the Security Council gave a majority vote in favour of the resolution.

China’s interpretation of the resolution remained in the minority as the Soviet Ambassador Valentin Lozinsky reaffirmed the Soviet Union’s commitment to confronting Iraq’s aggression, and warned that “the use of force to redraw State frontiers and annex a sovereign country can start a chain reaction that threatens the entire world community.”

However, Iraq’s Ambassador al-Anbari read the resolution as a declaration of war. It was a plan “aimed at using force against Iraq and serving the interests of the United States and the expansionist interests of Zionism in the region, as well as United States hegemony over the wealth of the region, shipping in the Gulf and the destiny of the peoples in the Gulf.”

Consolidating a consensus on resolution 665 was the first test of the United Nations Security Council in the wake of the Cold War. Although the Security Council had met and reiterated on four separate occasions the importance of a unified and unequivocal stance against Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait throughout August, the addition of an enforcement mechanism was the largest step toward reversing Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. Richard Haass stressed how

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381 Ibid. 31.
382 Ibid. 53.
383 Ibid. 41.
important resolution 665 was to the U.S., as he explained that “we were about to be faced
with the awful choice of having to let them [shipments destined for Iraq] go through, which
would break the embargo and set a terrible precedent, or use force without a U.N. blessing,
which could lead to the loss of support from the Soviets and possibly others not just for
sanctions enforcement but for the entire effort to undo what Saddam had done.” Secretary
Baker’s final efforts to secure support in the Security Council vindicated his coercive style of
diplomacy. However, despite Security Council demands that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait, and
the sanctions now being enforced on Iraq, Saddam showed no indication of leaving Kuwait.
This left Bush and his advisors to ponder where to take this unprecedented level of
international solidarity.

Maintaining the International Coalition

It had taken until August 20, well into the second year of his presidency, for Bush to sign off
National Security Directive 45 that updated U.S. policy toward the Persian Gulf. Although the
directive had helped to propel resolution 665 through the Security Council, it also committed
the U.S. to finding a diplomatic solution to the Persian Gulf crisis, or at least a diplomatically
supported solution. The directive insisted that “the Secretary of State should continue to
work bilaterally with our allies and friends, and in concert with the international community
through the United Nations and other for a, to find a peaceful solution to end the Iraqi
occupation of Kuwait and to restore Kuwait’s legitimate government." Although the
Security Council had responded to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, there was still no solution,
and the U.S. military build-up in Saudi Arabia continued. Powell described what he saw as
he flew into Saudi Arabia in early September as “the beginnings of a formidable force
gathering as our allies started to arrive, the British first. The Gulf states committed forces,

385 Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 83.
along with France, Canada, Italy, Egypt, Syria, and others eventually totalling twenty-eight nations. Countries unable to contribute troops helped finance the buildup. Adhering to the national security directive, Secretary Baker left in early September for an eleven-day trip that would see him visit nine countries and include a summit in Helsinki with Bush and the Soviet Union Chairman Mikhail Gorbachev. The impetus of the journey, dubbed the “tin cup trip”, was to reinforce diplomatic support and extract any financial contributions to help offset the cost of the military build-up. As a result, the trip was a major success. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt all pledged assistance, and Egypt enjoyed its foreign debt slashed by $7.1 billion. The Helsinki conference also heralded an unprecedented level of agreement between the U.S. and Soviet Union for a solution to the Persian Gulf crisis. In early September, the initial stages of consolidating international action against Iraq were coming together.

In the Security Council there were signs of opposition to U.S. leadership. On September 14, Cuba introduced a revision to resolution 661 that would rescind what they believed to be an overreach of authority by the Security Council. With the support of Yemen and China, the revision sought to specifically exclude foodstuffs and medical supplies from the embargo that was believed to be exacerbating the suffering of Iraqi citizens. Ambassador Li Diaoyu, explaining China’s support for the revision, added that the revision was “proposed by Cuba entirely in the spirit of humanitarianism.” The revision, however, was rejected by the Security Council, and a counter draft resolution was introduced that promised to tighten the

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387 Powell, My American Journey, 475.
389 Sarah Kreps, in Coalitions of Convenience: United States Military Interventions after the Cold War, focuses on turn toward multilateralism in the wake of the Cold War. Kreps notes that the U.S., in 1990, did not appeal to the United Nations for support out of a philosophical embrace of collective security. The U.S., according to Kreps, sought a multilateral coalition against Iraq in order to share the burden of what promised to be a large operational commitment to force Iraq from Kuwait. Additionally, Kreps notes that “While the United States emerged from the Cold War as the lone superpower, the domestic environment leading up to the conflict was less auspicious, creating incentives for multilateralism as a way to reduce the burden of war.” Sarah E. Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience: United States Military Interventions after the Cold War, (Oxford University Press, 2011), 66.
restrictions on humanitarian aid flowing into Iraq and Kuwait. Whereas Cuba had suggested that items that were deemed necessary for humanitarian purposes be excluded outright from the sanctions, the draft resolution proposed to delegate on a case-by-case basis the provision of humanitarian goods. The increased monitoring of humanitarian aid proved a source of offence for Ambassador Alarcon, who launched into a tirade against the U.S. for what he saw as irony. Alarcon explained that Cuba was well aware of the effects of a blockade as the U.S. had held Cuba under embargo for thirty years, which had included “a total denial of any possibility of access to the markets of foodstuffs, medicine or medical supplies of the country that is illegally imposing that blockade.” 391 Arguing that the Security Council was inconsistently applying moral standards, Alarcon stated that “it is justifiable to take such drastic measures and be cold in the face of human suffering to ensure that measures are taken and objectives reached. But east Jerusalem was also occupied and annexed by an occupying power. The Golan Heights was and continues to be annexed by an occupying Power.” 392 Despite Cuba’s protest, resolution 666 passed with no opposition from the permanent members. Even China voted in favour of resolution 666, despite supporting Cuba’s revision, Ambassador Li Diaoyu explaining that resolution 666 “guarantees the integrity of United Nations efforts to end Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait by peaceful means.” 393 China’s fickle position in the Security Council was of no surprise to Secretary Baker, who later explained that the Chinese loathed being isolated more than they feared losing out to resolutions. Therefore, the Chinese could be counted on in most cases for support when put under coercive diplomacy. 394

As the Security Council debated resolution 666, Ambassador Abulhasan took the opportunity to describe in detail, for the first time, the atrocities that were presumably being committed by the occupying Iraqi forces. Abulhasan claimed that “Iraqi soldiers are so brutal and so

391 Ibid. 18.
392 Ibid. 33.
393 Ibid. 38.
arrogant that even premature babies have been left to die because the medical equipment they need has been stolen and taken to Iraq.” The accusation by Abulhasan was part of a deliberate public relations campaign that emphasised the social costs of the invasion, and hoped to provoke an emotional reaction against the occupation of Kuwait. Iraq only made matters worse when, on September 14, Iraqi forces raided several diplomatic residencies in Kuwait City and besieged a number of embassies, apprehending third-party nationals as hostages. The Security Council immediately convened to condemn the actions of Iraq, and France tabled resolution 667 to ensure the Security Council was unified. Despite a few concerns over the appropriate response should there be any harm inflicted to third-party nationals, the Security Council unanimously condemned Iraq. Deputy Ambassador Kadrat attempted to clarify Iraq’s position by stating that technically “these instructions stipulate that these residences should not be entered, although they no longer have diplomatic immunity,” and assuring the Security Council that all third-party nationals would be cared for in Iraq. However, Kadrat warned France that they were “fully responsible for the escalation of the situation, with all its ramifications and consequences.” Ambassador Pierre-Louis Blanc was curt with his response that the facts were clear and “the truth cannot be camouflaged. The Council…it has, quite rightly, just unanimously condemned the new act of aggression committed by Iraq.” The moral outrage that was being fanned by the public campaign by Kuwait, and Iraq’s hostage taking, began to take a toll on Bush who wrote privately that Saddam was attempting to make “an oasis into a wasteland.” With intelligence reports reiterating Abulhasan’s accusations of brutality, Bush explained that “this just hardens my resolve. I am wondering if we need to speed up the timetable.” Bush later clarified that he did not have a personal grudge against Saddam Hussein, “but I had a deep

397 Ibid.
398 Ibid. 42.
moral objection to what he had done and was doing. It was unprincipled, and we could not permit it to go on.” And despite emotions threatening to overtake reason, Bush stressed that he was “equally determined to keep our efforts multilateral, and to emphasize that our policy was based on principle, not personalities.” However, Bush’s patience was not indefinite, and Powell was asked persistently whether a solution could not come sooner. Powell understood Bush’s impatience because “he did not think he could hold the international coalition together indefinitely.” With American troops deployed in Saudi Arabia, the pressure was on Bush to find a solution sooner, rather than later.

On September 25, as a show of solidarity in the United Nations Security Council, and for only the third time in its history, a session was convened at the ministerial level in order to debate the situation in the Persian Gulf. This underscored the importance of the crisis and the international attention that was focused on the Persian Gulf. The ministers voted unanimously on resolution 670 that extended the embargo against Iraq to contain aviation traffic, alongside the restriction of maritime traffic. However, the ministers themselves were more optimistic as to what the solidarity meant to the United Nations. Secretary Baker explained that “For international society to permit Iraq to overwhelm a small neighbour and, in effect, simply to erase it from the map would send a very disastrous message. The hopes of our world for a new, more peaceful, post-cold-war era would be dimmed, if not dashed.” Secretary Baker stressed that there could be no economic exchanges with Iraq as it would dismantle the sanctions regime that had been built around Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, remarking that the consensus of the Security Council was unprecedented. The United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was equally forthcoming with praise for the Security Council, stating that “On the debris of the Iron Curtain we are now building a new, a better international order. We have to entrench this new habit of co-operation if we are to be

400 Ibid. 375.
401 Ibid.
402 Powell, My American Journey, 478.
spared the hatred, the bloodshed which have scarred the history of this century so far.”404 However, China’s Foreign Minister Qian Qichen took the opportunity to curb talk of a new world order, reiterating that despite the consensus within the Security Council, the “use of force in any name is unacceptable to us.”405 Beneath the façade of solidarity in the Security Council were gaps in the diplomatic postures of the major powers. The U.S. and U.K. were united in their demand that the status quo be restored in the Persian Gulf, and the Soviets and Chinese were persistent in their search for a diplomatic solution. But, France was caught expressing a dislike for restoring the absolutist government in Kuwait. Francois Mitterrand stressed, in a letter sent to Bush, that although Security Council demands were non-negotiable the implementation of a democratic government in Kuwait should be a condition for international support. The immediate response back from the U.S. was that solidarity was important, and that there could not be any conditions that might be utilised by Saddam to his own ends.406 France accepted the rebuttal, but the tension underscored that patience was wearing thin for a solution to the crisis.

The diplomatic position of the U.S. hardened throughout October as the Soviet Union made several attempts at securing a pre-emptive diplomatic victory by appealing to their contacts in Baghdad. However, the Soviets were not to find any success, and Powell requested a meeting with Secretary Baker to discuss their options. Secretary Baker recalled that the meeting stressed a consensus between the military and the State Department as they agreed “both a more aggressive military and diplomatic policy was required if there was any hope of getting Iraq out of Kuwait.” Secretary Baker explained that Powell “recognized that sanctions were having no substantial effect on Saddam, and understood that the President would soon have to decide whether sterner options were necessary.”407 As the situation in the Persian Gulf continued, with no likely solution in sight, Bush pondered the advice and

404 Ibid. 39-40.
405 Ibid. 49-50.
406 Bush; Scowcroft, A World Transformed, 376.
agreed, on October 24, to increase the military deployment in the Persian Gulf to a level that would guarantee an offensive capability. It was believed, within the White House, that this offensive capability would not be politically viable without United Nations Security Council authorisation. On October 27, the U.S. took the chance to push for a more militant solution when Kuwait requested a meeting of the Security Council, in the hope for a proactive and explicit resolution of the crisis in the Persian Gulf, and the guarantee of restitution from Iraq for the damages incurred during the occupation. Ambassador Abdulhasan was hopeful that the Security Council could impose a suitable remuneration from Iraq for the pain and suffering inflicted on the Kuwaiti people. However, he specified that “the Security Council is expected to set out promptly to consider what additional measures are needed to achieve its ultimate goal, that of dislodging the aggressor and restoring all the law abiding party’s rights to it.”

Although Kuwait was within its rights to be impatient, and the U.S. was growing impatient behind closed doors, not all members of the Security Council appreciated the audacious push towards a confrontation with Iraq. The Soviet Union was particularly critical, and forced the Security Council to deliberate on the reparations requested by Kuwait. Ambassador Lozinsky explained that the Soviet Union was opposed to any military solution, and a diplomatic solution was the preferred method for settling the dispute. Ambassador Lozinsky went on, “as the Council knows, the special representative of the President of the Soviet Union, Mr. Primakov, is currently in Baghdad, and we have great hopes for the success of his mission there.” As a result of the Soviet Union’s delaying tactics, the Security Council ceased debate for two days while diplomatic meetings with Iraq took place.

In the end, the Soviet effort was in vain, and when the Security Council resumed seating on October 29, Ambassador Anbari chose to clarify Iraq’s position in the Persian Gulf. Anbari denounced the Security Council, claiming that at no stage did any member “consult with Iraq on any of the eight resolutions adopted since 2 August 1990 or any paragraph therein,

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409 Ibid. 16.
despite the fact that all those resolutions concern Iraq and affect its independence.“410

Anbari likened the resolutions to ultimatums demanding capitulation, “rather than a form that urged peace.”411 According to Anbari, Saddam had already proposed a solution to the crisis in the Persian Gulf in August when had sought a regional conference on issues in the Middle East, explaining:

All those who really want to promote and consolidate the rule of law in international relations, which, we hope, is what is meant by all that talk of the so-called “new international order”, must have hoped that the Council would take the opportunity provided by President Saddam Hussein’s initiative and, at long last, draw up the necessary rules and arrangements for resolving all the problems of the region.412

Ambassador Abulhasan retorted that the Security Council remain focused on the atrocities committed against Kuwait, adding that “the league of Arab states met in Cairo from the very beginning of the aggression and adopted a resolution condemning it and calling on Iraq to withdraw unconditionally and fully before the meetings of the Security Council.”413 There was no linkage to be made between Iraq’s conquest of Kuwait and any other issue in the Middle East. Furthermore, Iraq’s diatribe came as no surprise to Abulhasan as he explained that the Soviet Union’s representative, Yevgeny Primakov, who had attempted to reach a diplomatic solution in Baghdad, was very objective when he left Iraq as “he said that his meeting with the Iraqi leadership was disappointing.”414 The Security Council reinforced its support of Kuwait by unanimously voting on reparations from Iraq for their occupation of Kuwait. But, instead of capitulation, Anbari took one last shot, addressing Abulhasan directly and stating “I would like to make it clear that I have the highest respect personally for my friend Mr.

411 Ibid. 8-10.
412 Ibid. 23-25.
413 Ibid. 41.
414 Ibid. 43-45.
Abulhasan. However, I will not reply to his misleading, I might say abusive, statement. It goes without saying that my Government does not recognise him as the representative of anyone.”

It went without saying that throughout the entirety of Anbari’s lecture to the Security Council, he had not referred to Kuwait once.

**All Necessary Means**

With the growing impatience not only of Kuwait but also Bush to see the Persian Gulf crisis resolved there was an added emphasis on securing authorisation for the use of force. Secretary Baker had to work his diplomatic connections in order to guarantee the majority of votes necessary to see a resolution pass through the Security Council, a process that he undertook throughout November. In a transnational effort Secretary Baker spent eighteen days traveling to twelve countries on three continents, meeting “personally with all my Security Council counterparts in an intricate process of cajoling, extracting, threatening, and occasionally buying votes.” This effort was assisted by the Security Council rotating presidency that was held by the U.S. in November, and meant the agenda could be set according to Secretary Baker’s success and schedule. On November 27, the Security Council reached the deadline for hearing the resolution that would authorise the use of force in the Persian Gulf, and the first of three meetings was convened. Ambassador Abulhasan, wasting no time, played for the Security Council a number of audio and video clips that shared witness accounts of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The intent was to enable these witnesses to “report the truth in a direct and spontaneous manner and to allow their message to reflect the truth of current events in Kuwait, and in order for Council members to keep that message in their hearts and minds and in the records of the council, in

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415 Ibid. 94-95.
the hope that it may prompt the Council to respond. So far, Kuwait’s public relations campaign was working.

In amidst the carefully orchestrated display of emotion, Ambassador Abulhasan stated directly to the Security Council members that the only way forward “lies in your historic resolutions which must be scrupulously implemented and complied with in the interest of the new world order, in which the spirit of human brotherhood, love and peace would reign supreme.” After a brief interlude for private consultations, a succession of representatives from Middle Eastern states voiced their united denunciation of Iraqi aggression. In a sign that Secretary Baker’s regional diplomacy had been successful, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Arabian ambassador, explained that the Iraqi invasion “makes every Arab feel ashamed and want to reject being historically associated with it.” Egypt’s Ambassador Amr Moussa, quoted President Hosni Mubarak saying “In the coming difficult weeks, we will spare no effort to reach a peaceful solution to the Gulf Crisis. However, Kuwait must be liberated and the wrongs and injustice against it must be righted.” The following day, even the Iranian Ambassador Sirous Nasseri, shared a similar sentiment, agreeing that “The only way to achieve peace and the return of normalcy to the region is through the total withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.” Nasseri admitted that outside assistance would be required, but under the proviso of “the total withdrawal of foreign forces from this sensitive reason.” It was clear that from a regional perspective, an immediate resolution to the crisis was needed, and support would be given for any measures that would expedite that process.

418 Ibid. 18-20.
420 Ibid. 18-20.
421 Ibid. 16.
422 Ibid. 17.
In order to underline the importance of the vote on November 29, foreign ministers represented their states at the Security Council for the fourth time in the history of the Security Council, and the second time during the Persian Gulf crisis. Ambassador Pickering utilised his position as president of the Security Council to set the tone with his opening remarks, stating:

History has given us another chance…we have the chance to make this Security Council and this United Nations true instruments for peace and for justice across the globe. We must not let the United Nations go the way of the League of Nations. We must fulfil our common vision of a peaceful and just post-cold-war world…if Iraq does not reverse its course peacefully, then other necessary measures, including the use of force, should be authorized. We must put the choice to Saddam Hussein in unmistakable terms.\(^423\)

The proposed resolution asked for the authorisation of “all necessary means” to enforce the resolutions that had been imposed on Iraq since August 2, adding a deadline for the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Predictably, Ambassador Anbari declared that Iraq was unmoved by the resolution, and demanded that “No individual Member state may be authorised to lynch a particular country for any reasons.”\(^424\) In an effort to divert the blame for regional instability toward the U.S., Anbari complained that the Security Council had simply mimicked the will and want of the U.S., as “the Council’s resolutions would not have been adopted with such alacrity had it not been for American pressure, pressure in which the American politicians take pride to the point that theirs has been the only voice that we hear.”\(^425\) Anbari remained defiant in his closing remarks, warning the U.S. that if they were to impose war on Iraq “then that will be our destiny, and I assure you that our people will not kneel down and will measure up to its

\(^{424}\) Ibid. 21.  
\(^{425}\) Ibid. 26.
responsibilities, for it is demanding its right and defending that right against injustice and tyranny.”

Iraq found some support from Yemen, who opposed the resolution because it used United Nations authority to justify the preponderance of U.S. military force in the region, arguing that it was “authority without accountability.”

Ambassador al-Ashtal added that “in the annals of the United Nations this will long be remembered as the ‘war resolution’.”

On the other hand, Cuba’s refusal to vote in favour of the resolution was based on opposition to the unprecedented nature of the resolutions being passed through the Security Council. Cuba had been, from the outset, particularly sensitive to any resolution that authorised the use of force, and in meetings with Secretary Baker, who stressed that he was conferring as President of the Security Council and not Secretary of State, Cuba’s Foreign Minister Sидоро Malmierca Peoli clarified that Cuba believed the crisis would be resolved in time without the need for military intervention.

Peoli related the situation in Kuwait to that of Korea in 1950, and argued:

The case of Korea is an example of how the use of force under the flag of the United Nations can after three years of war, hundreds of thousands of victims and enormous material destruction, end in an armistice which keeps that country divided as it was before the conflict broke out, and with foreign military bases and tens of thousands of soldiers in the southern part of the territory.

If force was the chosen method to respond to the ills of the world, then “there can be no denying that the procedure is uncivilised to say the least and it will cause the international community enormous frustration and show that the United Nations and the principal statesmen of today’s world are unable to solve problems politically and peacefully.”

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426 Ibid. 31.
427 Ibid.
428 Ibid. 33.
431 Ibid. 58.
Secretary Baker, noting that Cuba was a small state on the Security Council, dismissed Peoli’s consternation.

Yemen and Cuba’s opposition was not enough to stall the passage of the resolution, and the true test of the Security Council consensus rested with the remaining permanent members who had veto powers. Secretary Baker focused his diplomatic efforts on the Soviet Union and China in order to ensure that the U.S. could count on their support, or at least abstention from the vote. During November, Secretary Baker had visited his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow in an effort to secure the Soviet Union’s support. It would take thirteen hours of negotiations with both Shevardnadze and Gorbachev, a highly classified brief about the projected military success, and the reassurance from Secretary Baker that Bush was prepared, with reluctance, to use force against Iraq, before the Soviets gave any indication that they would support the U.S. in the Security Council. Secretary Baker, after his meeting, explained in a cable to Bush just after the meeting that he was confident that the Soviet’s would follow the resolution. Shevardnadze clarified the Soviet’s position at the Security Council on November 29, adding “today we have started the count-down of the ‘pause of goodwill’. We are confident that before the time is up events will take a turn towards peace and that the pause will usher in a transition to a political settlement.” The Soviet position looked toward the future, and incorporated Gorbachev’s idea of a new international order, as Shevardnadze finished by stating that “the world will not enter a more lucid, calm and stable phase unless it can meet the residual challenges of the past and rise to the new challenges of the present and the future.” On the other hand, the Chinese proved to be an obstacle for Secretary Baker. In his preliminary meeting with his counterpart Qian Qichen, Secretary Baker noted that the Chinese appeared unlikely to use their veto because of the potential political repercussions. However, it was obvious that their

434 Ibid. 92.
opposition to the resolution would not be toned down. Secretary Baker worried what effect the Chinese opposition would have to the tenuous international coalition. China used this to their diplomatic advantage and pressed for the U.S. to concede a diplomatic visit from Bush to Beijing, on the condition of support for the resolution. The diplomatic back and forth between Baker and Qian Qichen went on until just before the vote, and, understanding that China would not veto the resolution, Secretary Baker settled on the Chinese abstaining from the vote. The U.S. did capitulate to some Chinese demands to ensure that a veto did not appear. Secretary Baker explained that “the Chinese would get their presidential meeting. But they didn’t get what they really wanted: a presidential visit to China, and a commitment to press for the removal of economic sanctions imposed after the Tiananmen Square massacre. They would have won us a yes vote on the resolution, but at a terrible cost to principle.”

In the debate, Qian Qichen restated China’s five principles for state relations as “mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence; and that international disputes should be settled through dialogue and consultations.” Because the resolution authorised external interference, China rationalised that it could not vote in favour of the resolution. But, because the resolution allowed for a pause of goodwill, China did not veto the resolution as it adhered to the Security Council commitment to reverse the occupation of Kuwait. Therefore, China abstained from the vote. After the successful passage of the resolution, Secretary Baker was blunt in his final remarks, stating “the words authorize the use of force.” There was no doubt that the Security Council had authorised a military intervention to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

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437 Ibid. 103.
438 The U.S. perseverance in the United Nations Security Council was, in the end, worth the wait. As Alexander Thompson concurs, although the U.S. had made political concessions to China, and endured a prolonged
The U.S. had secured a considerable diplomatic victory, and resolution 678 granted authority for the military to intervene in Iraq. However, Bush wanted to ensure that all peaceful options were exhausted. This prompted Bush to announce, more to his domestic audience, that Secretary Baker was prepared to meet Saddam Hussein in Baghdad if Tariq Aziz was prepared to meet with Bush in Washington, sometime in December. Secretary Baker later recalled that the decision to pursue a meeting with Saddam was an effort “to go the extra mile for peace.”\footnote{Baker, \textit{The Politics of Diplomacy}, 351.} More candid, Bush wrote in his diary that he did not expect much from any meeting between Secretary Baker and Aziz, however “the failure of the Baker-Aziz talk, I think, will help us with the Congress.”\footnote{Bush; Scowcroft, \textit{A World Transformed}, 443.} Proposals were sent back and forth between the U.S. and Iraq all through December, as one group of officials refused the other’s request. It was becoming more likely that the U.S. would not have talks with Iraq after fifteen alternative meetings were proposed between December 20 and January 3, including Christmas day, but not one could be confirmed.\footnote{Ibid. 353.} At the very end of December, Bush rescinded any flexibility and offered one final choice of a meeting between Baker and Aziz in Geneva on January 9, 1991. Understanding that this was the very last chance of a diplomatic encounter before the deadline, the Iraqis agreed to the meeting. However, Secretary Baker had to assure Kuwaiti Foreign Minister al-Sabah privately that the U.S. had “no intention of wavering…his anxieties were somewhat relieved when I confided that, despite our desire for a peaceful outcome, ‘my own sense is that we will probably have to use force’.”\footnote{Baker, \textit{The Politics of Diplomacy}, 352.} Secretary Baker’s personal understanding of the meeting was kept predictably quiet.

\footnote{diplomatic negotiations in the Security Council, “In the end, the wait endured by Washington was valuable politically: it satisfied European countries that hoped to further explore diplomatic solutions, and it allowed Arab leaders to investigate Arab solutions. It also showed that the U.S. leadership was willing to be constrained and to accommodate the interests of others in its approach to the conflict.” As a result, the United Nations Security Council supported Bush tilt at war with Iraq. Alexander Thompson, \textit{Channels of Power: The UN Security Council and U.S. Statecraft in Iraq}, (Cornell University Press, 2009), 64.}
In preparation for the meeting, Bush drafted a letter to be delivered by Secretary Baker to Minister Aziz, with the expectation that it be passed on to Saddam. The letter restated the commitment to implement the United Nations resolutions, and stressed that Iraq would be to blame for any foreseeable conflict. Its language was brusque but necessary to stress the seriousness of the impending deadline.\footnote{A full transcript of the letter was published in George Bush, All The Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings, (Scribner: New York, 1999), 499.} Upon landing in Geneva, it was clear to Secretary Baker’s delegation that the Iraqi’s were not in a flexible mood. Secretary Baker recalled that the U.S. advance team had “negotiated with the Iraqis until 3:00AM over protocol issues, including the size of the flags that would be on the table.”\footnote{Baker, The Politics of Diplomacy, 356.} Despite the importance of the meeting, the core objective to deliver Bush’s letter to Saddam remained incomplete. Minister Aziz refused to accept the letter and left it on the table between the two diplomats. Secretary Baker had made sure to hand a second copy to Aziz to be read alongside the sealed envelope containing a copy for Saddam in order to stress upon Aziz that “It’s important that we clearly understand each other. I can’t make you take this letter with you, nor will I try. However, you should know that we may or may not publish it. You are the only person on your side of the table who knows what is in it. That seems a large responsibility for one to take on oneself.”\footnote{Ibid. 358.} Aziz assumed every inch of the Iraqi defiance that had characterised their approach to the international community since the invasion of Kuwait. Dismissing Secretary Baker’s description of a vast and powerful military presence ready to force Iraq from Kuwait, Aziz retorted that “we have outlasted coalitions like yours in the past, and we will last longer than your coalition will last. We are not afraid of being attacked by a superior force. Our people not only support us, but they love us. Our population of nineteen million is convinced that once war breaks out between us, we will be victorious.” There appeared nothing Secretary Baker could do to change Aziz’s mind as there was no mandate for compromise in the Security Council resolutions that stipulated Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally. Both letters were left discarded on the table as the meeting was
concluded and the two diplomats left the room. Secretary Baker later remarked that he pitied the fatalistic trajectory Aziz had embraced.

After the meeting, and with a moment to collect his thoughts, Secretary Baker called Bush to inform him that Iraq did not accept the United Nations Security Council resolution, and the deadline remained intact. According to Secretary Baker, the decision to intervene in Iraq had been made at the end of November, and this meeting with Aziz had served a different purpose. After the official press conference, Secretary Baker wrote that “I knew we would win the war with Iraq but the battle with Congress and the public was still very much in doubt.” He added that his “press conference was primarily aimed at the domestic audience and was yet another example of diplomacy via television.” Secretary Baker was right in that the domestic audience were hanging on his every word, and that the decision to intervene was yet to be fought out in Congress. However, Secretary Baker concluded that, diplomatically, “what made the invasion of Kuwait inevitable – and the war to redress it - was the decline of Soviet power, the ascension of American power, and the fear that this caused in Saddam – fear that while America might not react now to his power grab, it would be more and more likely to do so as the unipolar world took shape.” Saddam had seen an opportunity as the world emerged from the Cold War and had decided to grasp it. Where Saddam had failed was in his underestimation of Bush, and the united response of the international community that created the necessary conditions for cooperation over reversing Iraq’s aggression.

As this chapter has illustrated, the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq reassured Bush that he had embraced the correct response to Saddam Hussein’s annexation of Kuwait. Despite Bush’s neglect of the Persian Gulf when he was elected president, the administration was satisfied with the developing relationship between the U.S. and Iraq and ignored suggestions of Iraqi intransigence. Only Saddam Hussein acting out

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446 Ibid. 364.
447 Ibid. 365.
aggressively and threatening the status quo in the Persian Gulf could force a change in policy. It was here that Bush had the opportunity to exercise his strengths as a diplomat, and the response that was cultivated ultimately embraced the role of the international community in responding to acts of violence, while quietly reinforcing the role of the U.S. as an international leader. Unlike the domestic origins of the decision to go to war, Bush was confident that U.S. diplomacy could secure the support for armed intervention. And, with the benefit of experience, Bush ensured that the decision to go to war was legitimate. Saddam Hussein, through the annexation of Kuwait, demonstrated to Bush that Iraqi capabilities were evidence of Iraqi intentions, and through the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq it can be seen that Bush was adamant Saddam Hussein would not reach his presumed potential.
Chapter Five

The Domestic Origins of the Decision to Go to War with Iraq, 2001-2003

“The argument for the war is one of solidarity with the oppressed. These ought to be the principles of the left. The people in the antiwar movement have fallen into confusion. They should be protesting Bush – but make sure that a genuine democracy rise in Iraq.”

In the image of his father, Time chose George W. Bush as person of the year in December 2000, amid controversial circumstances. There was a focus on Bush’s domestic leadership as he denounced the Clinton administration’s domestic indiscretions and pushed aside the Supreme Court challenge that had threatened his election victory. Bush’s presidency also meant that the Republicans, who had been exiled from the White House in 1992 when George H. W. Bush lost his re-election bid to Bill Clinton, had returned to the national stage, bolstered by the Republican majority that had been swept into Congress. Therefore, as Bush settled into the presidency in 2001, foreign policy earned a lower priority ahead of domestic initiatives. Lingering foreign policy issues, such as continuing sanctions against Iraq and the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Iraq that had led to periodic airstrikes, were acknowledged as areas that required the administration’s attention but were pushed aside as Bush focused on proving himself to his domestic audience. Despite Bush’s efforts to focus on anything other than Iraq, the continued fascination with Saddam Hussein ensured the Iraqi leader remained firmly in the public imagination. On September 11, 2001, foreign policy took a dramatic shift as threats that were thought only to exist beyond the


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Chapter Five

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borders of the United States materialised in terrorist attacks that killed thousands of Americans on American soil. The fear of another attack changed the priorities of the administration. National security became paramount, and foreign policy underwent a reformation to reflect the militant posture of the U.S. as Bush pursued those who were believed responsible for the terrorist attacks. During the aftermath of September 11, issues regarding with Iraq were distorted into the spectre of an imminent threat, and Bush, embracing the domestic pressure that his administration was now under, set about eradicating from the international community the presence of terror. It is in this context that the domestic origins of the decision to go to war against Iraq in 2003 emerged. Bush interpreted Saddam Hussein's past intentions to pursue weapons of mass destruction to mean that he had the capabilities to use them against the U.S., and therefore posed an unacceptable risk to U.S. national security.

This chapter will illustrate the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. Beginning with the election of George W. Bush as president in 2001, the domestic agenda of the administration was justified in contrast to the outgoing Clinton administration. It was shown that Bush's strengths were not in foreign policy, and the administration lacked a foreign policy direction. This transitioned on September 11, 2001, when foreign policy immediately shifted from the review and contrarian posturing of previous foreign policies to a reactionary stance in order to secure U.S. national security. The culmination of the transformation shown by Bush in the aftermath of September 11 was seen in January 2002, when Bush gave his State of the Union address referring to Iraq, alongside Iran and North Korea, as part of an axis of evil poised against the U.S. The elevation of the threat posed by Iraq, specifically towards the U.S., was the result of a reactionary process within the administration that emphasised the inconclusiveness of past action toward Iraq, and the potential threat that the state continued to pose toward the U.S. Bush made it clear throughout 2002 that the war on terror, now well underway, would evolve from the pursuit of individuals and focus on states. By the end of 2002, Bush went to Congress with a
proposition to authorise the use of force against Iraq should the Iraqi government fail to comply with international demands for renewed weapons inspections. The overwhelming support from Congress reassured Bush that he had clearly rationalised the necessity of the use of force to disarm Iraq. By the State of the Union address in 2003, the decision to go to war with Iraq was firmly established and, with the backing of Congress, Bush demanded the international community to side either with him, or with the terrorists.

The 43rd President of the United States

George W. Bush was elected president in 2001, after being awarded the electoral vote through a Supreme Court ruling and despite losing the popular vote. Bush’s campaign had focused on his personality to the detriment of policy, and it was said that he had run “on character and a promise of change, themes that resonated with many Americans given the scandals and controversies that reverberated throughout eight years of two Clinton administrations.” The emphasis on the character of the leader, as opposed to the policies put forward by the leader, meant that Bush quickly had to reconcile his administration after the Supreme Court challenge and vindicate his election victory. Addressing Congress on February 27, Bush was adamant that the administration would leave its mark on U.S. history, stating “In the end we will be judged not only by what we say or how we say it, we will be judged by what we’re able to accomplish.” And it was in foreign policy that Bush sought to exert U.S. power. According to Bush, “America has a window of opportunity to extend and secure our present peace by promoting a distinctly American internationalism.” This meant confronting “terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants in rogue nation’s intent upon developing weapons of mass destruction.” However, Bush did not announce any intention to seek out those who threatened U.S. national security. Remaining true to his earlier

commitment against the futility of nation building, Bush instead announced the return of a proposed anti-ballistic missile system that would protect the U.S.\textsuperscript{452} The anti-ballistic missile system received a lukewarm reception in Congress where Republicans were hoping for a more proactive U.S. foreign policy. Coincidently, Baghdad’s airport reopened its international terminals and reports were showing that the “air traffic, from about 20 nations so far, is a testament to a seismic shift in Iraq’s international status.” This was despite the United States launching airstrikes across Iraq in February for breaches of the no-fly zone.\textsuperscript{453} The incongruities of Bush’s foreign policy planning towards existing foreign policy problems led to demands from Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), supported by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, for Bush to immediately address the problem of Saddam Hussein. According to Senator Brownback, “we’re saying we don’t like this man in power, but we’re then not willing to go ahead and take steps to remove him.”\textsuperscript{454} Indeed, Bush had inherited a system of punitive airstrikes that Clinton had embraced, and he appeared reluctant to change.

The February airstrikes were a sign that Bush could not ignore Iraq. The airstrikes were approved while Bush was in Mexico, attempting to reinvigorate the U.S. relationship with Latin America. Although the airstrikes were justified because of breaches in the no-fly zone over Iraq, they were a distraction from Bush’s other priorities. Richard Haass, now Director of Policy and Planning in the State Department, was disappointed that Iraq had again upstaged a meaningful foreign policy announcement in Mexico. Haass argued that “the new administration was looking for a chance to signal that it was not going to be business as usual,” but criticised “a weak NSC process that should have made sure the administration did not step on its own story.”\textsuperscript{455} National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice understood the February airstrikes differently to Haass, instead describing Iraq as a “festering problem.” Rice explained that the 1991 Gulf War had “ended inconclusively with Iraqi forces expelled

\textsuperscript{452} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{455} Haass, \textit{War of Necessity, War of Choice}, 173.
from Kuwait but the regime still in power,” and the assumptions of the George H. W. Bush administration that Saddam Hussein would fade away, or remain contained, were proving to be wrong. According to Rice, Iraq was a “preoccupation of the national security team” from the very beginning of the administration. However, Rice was quick to clarify that the preoccupation was about how to contain Iraq, not overthrow Saddam Hussein. In 2001, according to Rice, Bush’s main mission was not to confront Saddam Hussein but, instead, to confront “the new and rising threat in al Qaeda and its extremist kin, full of bravado and revolutionary zeal, and to lead at the beginning of a new and dangerous historical epoch.”

Despite inopportune timing, the airstrikes had their supporters within the administration. Vice President Dick Cheney reassured Bush that “from his point of view it had been a good message, showing that we’d be tough on Saddam Hussein.” Such words of confidence from the vice president reassured Bush’s decision making.

On May 1, Bush detailed the defense policy of his administration in a speech before the National Defense University in Washington. The speech helped to clarify the international presence of the U.S. that Bush wanted to portray to the American people. The thrust of the speech highlighted an evolution in military policy that had occurred since the end of the Cold War. Bush explained, “This is still a dangerous world, a less certain, a less predictable one. More nations have nuclear weapons, and still more have nuclear aspirations.” In order to confront these nuclear threats Bush announced a proactive stance, offering “To maintain peace, to protect our own citizens and our own allies and friends, we must seek security

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457 Ibid. 28.
458 There was evidence that departments were reviewing the U.S. position toward Iraq. Secretary of State Colin Powell had requested the origins of U.S. policy regarding regime change in Iraq from Edward S Walker, Jr., who was from the Bureau on Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. The memo stated that the U.S. had supported regime change in Iraq since 1998, and had evolved its position to stress that for as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, Iraq would remain a threat to its own people, the Persian Gulf region, and the security of the world. See Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Information Memo from Edward S. Walker, Jr. to Colin Powell, “Origins of the Iraq Regime Change Policy,” January 23, 2001.
based on more than the grim premise that we can destroy those who seek to destroy us.“This would mean creating a new framework “that allows us to build missile defense to counter the different threats of today’s world. To do so, we must move beyond the constraints of the 30-year-old ABM Treaty.” This was one of only a few foreign policies that Bush’s team had announced during the election campaign. It was hoped that the administration could “push to get nuclear weapons and missile defense out of a ‘Cold War mentality.’ To do this they hoped to arrange, with Russia, quick moves to allow both countries to work more on national missile defense and make large, further cuts in the old Cold War nuclear arsenals.” However, there were repercussions for a policy that required dismantling the anti-ballistic missile treaty that had been signed by the U.S. and Soviet Union in 1972, ostensibly to curtail an arms race in missile technology. Nevertheless, Bush was adamant that the ABM had become obsolete. Richard Butler, former chairman of the United Nations Special Commission to Iraq (UNSCOM), disagreed. According to Butler, the assumption that the threat to the U.S. in the 21st century was conventional was flawed. Butler explained, “The threat presently posed to the United States by rogue states is recognised as being remote, if it exists at all, in the field of ballistic missiles carrying nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction.” The real threat was not a missile being launched at the U.S. by another state. It was, instead, a biological or chemical weapon attack by a rogue state “delivered on their behalf by terrorists, in a briefcase or a truck, to an American city. Iraq, for example, possesses such weapons, and now that its programs go uninspected Iraq is developing more of them.” According to Butler, Bush was relying on populist policies that granted the president favour at home, but ignored more practical concerns. On this measure, Butler was correct. Bush’s focus was on vindicating his domestic

460 Ibid.
461 Ibid.
leadership, and any foreign policy that encouraged support of the administration at home took precedence over practicality.  

Bush had created diplomatic waves in his first six months in office because he lacked cohesive foreign policies. By the end of June, Bush had refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, begun the process of dismantling the ABM treaty, resurrected missile defense as a proactive policy option, approved airstrikes in Iraq, and supported the expansion of NATO. Despite some criticism of the openly unilateral U.S. movements, often in opposition to multilateral consensus, there were others who commended the renewed U.S. international leadership. Charles Krauthammer, in the Washington Post, praised Bush, stating, “the best unilateralism is velvet-glove unilateralism.” This support was alongside a hardening of defense policy that was encouraged by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Although Bush was winning support domestically for what was portrayed as strong international leadership, Secretary Rumsfeld was quick to reinforce that there were threats that required action:

Imagine what might happen if a rogue state were to demonstrate the capability to strike the U.S. or European populations with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. A policy of intentional vulnerability by the Western nations could give this state the power to hold us hostage. This scenario leaves us with three choices in the face of aggression: acquiesce and allow the rogue to invade its neighbours; oppose it and put Western population centres at risk; or pre-empt its action.

According to Rumsfeld, “the only thing we know for certain is that it is unlikely that any of us knows what is likely.” Despite Secretary Rumsfeld’s concerns over rogue states and their

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threat capabilities, there was some early opposition within the media to what was seen as a campaign to artificially inflate international threats. Shibley Telhami, in the Washington Post, explained, “Saddam Hussein will continue to pose a threat to U.S. interests, but his spectre in Washington is much larger than the man himself. Inflating a third-rate power is self-defeating; it limits policy options and sets aside more important priorities.” Secretary Rumsfeld had made it clear that the administration was working on a new definition of what constituted a threat to the U.S.

By July, Bush was ready to state U.S. international goals in a speech at the World Bank. There were three goals that were vital to Bush’s administration. First, there was the movement away from the ideas of the Cold War, and towards confronting new threats posed by rogue states, nuclear proliferation, and cyber-terrorism. Second, there was promoting global economic growth “through a world trading system that is dramatically more open and more free.” And, third, was to “remove the huge obstacles to development,” and fight illiteracy, disease, and unsustainable debt. According to Bush, these goals made up “compassionate conservatism” on a global scale, an outgrowth of his domestic agenda for “compassionate conservatism” at home. The goals, however, were ambiguous, and there were some calls for Bush to be more specific in regards to what constituted a rogue state. In the Wall Street Journal, Bush was encouraged to revisit U.S. policy towards Iraq, and “take swift and serious measures to remove Saddam Hussein from power.” The calls for a more aggressive stance toward Iraq were in contrast to renewing sanctions, a policy that had been encouraged by Secretary of State Colin Powell, and regarded by Richard Haass as one of only a few viable options. The other policies included “more intense military strikes when Saddam’s behaviour warranted [or the] prosecution of Saddam for war crimes.” In the Wall Street Journal, however, it was reported that Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary

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468 Zelikow, “U.S. Strategic Planning in 2001-02”, 100.
Wolfowitz had already devised a plan of regime change in Iraq.\footnote{Secretary Rumsfeld, in a recommendation to Condoleezza Rice, recommended a National Security Council meeting concerning Iraq on July 27, 2001. In the recommendation, Secretary Rumsfeld outlined failures that had diminished the overall effectiveness of international sanctions, and suggested the administration reconsider its options regarding Iraq, including withdrawing from enforcing the no-fly zone. However, Secretary Rumsfeld admitted that “if Saddam’s regime was ousted, we would have a much-improved position in the region and elsewhere.” U.S. Defense Department Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to Condoleezza Rice, “Iraq,” July 27, 2001.} The plan supported “the provisional and insurrectionary government of Iraq, the restoration of a safe haven in northern Iraq, the release of $1.6 billion in frozen Iraqi assets to assist the insurrection, a systematic air campaign to assist the insurrection and the positioning of U.S. ground forces to protect the insurrection ‘as the last resort’.”\footnote{Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 181.} The mixed messages from State and Defense, in conjunction with Bush’s ambiguous foreign policy footing, meant that Bush’s approval ratings were fluctuating between 51-53%, with a majority of respondents stating that they disagreed with almost every major policy decision made by Bush.\footnote{Rich Frank, “It’s good to be the king”, New York Times, July 7, 2001.} In the hope that the Democrats might wield some influence from a minority position in Congress, House minority leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) warned Bush of isolating the U.S. from the international community, arguing that the trend of rejecting treaties outright had weakened the U.S. “ability to pursue a broad range of global interests.”\footnote{Thom Shanker, “Gephardt launches an attack on Bush’s foreign policy”, New York Times, August 3, 2001.} Representative Gephardt added Bush, “one nation, acting alone, cannot possibly build a lasting strategic framework to which all other nations submit.” It had been a long eight months for Bush in foreign policy. However, thanks to the Republican majority in Congress, Bush was confident that progress with his domestic agenda would ensure foreign policy could take a backseat.

**An Attack on the United States**

In an effort to diminish the criticism surrounding Bush’s foreign policies, Secretary Powell gave an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* on September 9. Powell explained that the
U.S. had not neglected any of its international responsibilities. Instead, Bush had embraced straight-forward, no-nonsense decisions that had hastened diplomacy and enabled more suitable policy options. According to Powell, this was effective policy making. However, Saddam Hussein remained a central preoccupation for the interviewer, and Powell was asked “Do you really believe [Saddam] can be toppled, especially by the current opposition groups?” In response, Powell put the lingering issue of Iraq into historical context, explaining “Eleven years later Kuwait is safe. Iraq is a sad, desperate place; its infrastructure is collapsing. I do know that he will pass in due course, because he is on top of a failing way of running a country. Whether or not he can be toppled is not something I can predict.” The absence of policy directed at Iraq, and specifically Saddam Hussein, was exposed as the interviewer pressed Powell for the administration’s stance on Saddam Hussein’s leadership. Powell, retorting with an answer that was to the best of his knowledge, replied “It is the U.S. goal to see change in the regime.”

Despite Powell's insistence that Bush had made moves toward consolidating positions on foreign policy, there was still criticism from former U.S. diplomats over the fickle diplomatic manoeuvring of the administration. One former diplomat argued, on the dawn of September 11, that this dialogue was “only a beginning of understanding, not a discussion of policy. The public needs to know where the president intends to take the country internationally. He has told us much of what he is opposed to; he needs to lay out with some specificity what we are for besides missile defense and trade expansion.” The administration did not have long to find its foreign policy stance once reports that a civilian airliner had crashed into one of the World Trade towers in New York reached Bush.

A domestic shift was evident, and criticism of Bush was dispelled, after September 11 when terrorists hijacked civilian aircraft and crashed the planes into the World Trade Centre towers in New York, the Pentagon in Virginia, and a field in Pennsylvania. Amidst the repeated


footage of the planes colliding with the towers, and collapsing buildings, whatever reasoning Secretary Powell had hoped to convey in his interview evaporated as it became clear the U.S. was under attack. The impact of September 11 on the administration could not be understated. Rice later admitted, “I have always felt as if I operated in a king of fog, a virtual state of shock, for two days after 9/11.” As for Bush, he was informed of the attacks while sitting in a classroom reading to a group of school children and his response was to present a calm president finishing his task and collecting his thoughts in preparation for a response that was broadcast to the nation. Talking into the camera and reading from some scribbled notes, Bush explained that the U.S. had suffered from an apparent terrorist attack, declaring that “terrorism against our nation will not stand.” Bush later recalled that the line echoed his father’s denouncement of Iraqi aggression in 1990, writing “Dad’s words must have been buried in my subconscious, waiting to surface during another moment of crisis.” However, the media response was to speculate over who was responsible for the attacks and to focus on retribution.

Diplomat L. Paul Bremer III demanded that Bush use this moment as an opportunity to take a stand. For too long the U.S. had “contented itself with merely identifying states which support terrorism without their facing any serious consequences. The U.S. must deliver a clear ultimatum to those states: Either you destroy the terrorist operations on your territory or we will.” There were already inferences that Iraq was involved with the terrorist attacks, academic Laurie Mylroie stating that it was unfathomable that the suspected terrorist organisation al-Qaeda could have undertaken the attacks alone. It was “far more likely [bin laden] operated in conjunction with a state – the state with which the U.S. remains at war, namely Iraq.” Mylroie was reiterating a discussion that had taken place at Camp David on September 14, where Paul Wolfowitz had suggested to Bush that “the United States should

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477 Rice, No Higher Honor, 82.
Although Wolfowitz’s suggestion was the elephant in the room, by the end of September it was determined that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the attacks and that he was based in Afghanistan, protected by the Taliban who were in control of the country. The media had picked up that there were diverging opinions within the administration about a response, and Secretary Powell reassured the nation that no decision had been made to confront particular states or regimes, explaining that “if there are states and regimes, nations, that support terrorism, we hope to persuade them that it is in their interest to stop doing that. But I think ‘ending terrorism’ is where I would leave it.” This did not stop pressure on the administration to establish war aims by the end of September. According to the Wall Street Journal, regardless of Iraq’s role “Saddam Hussein remains the greatest menace to the security of the civilized world [and] the prospect that he might use nuclear, biological or chemical weapons in the future should concentrate the national mind. Deposing Saddam has to be considered as another war aim.” The lingering spectre of Saddam Hussein in the American imagination guaranteed his presence as a security threat to the U.S.

Bush, on September 20, left no doubt who was responsible for the terrorist attacks on September 11 when he addressed Congress. The attack was an act of war committed against the U.S. by the “enemies of freedom.” Singling out the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for harbouring the leaders of al-Qaeda, Bush gave the ultimatum “deliver to the United States authorities all of the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land.” However, Bush was also clear that the terrorist attacks were the beginning of a new direction in U.S. foreign policy. There would be no negotiation with any nation over terrorism as “every nation in every region now has a decision to make: either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will

481 Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 192.
be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime." The aggressive posture of the administration well-satisfied those who had been calling on Bush to make a move against Saddam Hussein. William Safire, who had been vocal during the 1991 Gulf War about George H. W. Bush’s failure to confront Saddam Hussein, admired that the U.S. was now targeting terrorists in Afghanistan, but blamed Secretary Powell for preventing the administration from turning its attention to Iraq. Safire was adamant that "Iraqi scientists today working feverishly in hidden biological laboratories and underground nuclear facilities would, if undisturbed, enable the hate-driven, power-crazed Saddam to kill millions." The consensus that was consolidating around Bush meant that he would have the domestic support for whatever response he deemed necessary. With support rallying around the president, the polls showed that Bush was at an 89% approval rating, with eight out of ten respondents admitting that they "will have to forfeit some of their personal freedoms to make the country safer." In the wake of great tragedy, Bush had finally found a purpose on which to base his presidency.

In the weeks after the terrorist attacks Bush’s domestic agenda faded into the background as U.S. national security became the primary concern. Rice described the new daily routine post-9/11 as "we began each morning with the President’s Daily Briefing. The session was now more operational, with both the CIA and FBI reporting on threats and efforts to disrupt them. This, in fact, complicated decision making, because the President had a tendency to ask policy questions that were prompted by intelligence information…I found myself constantly reminding the President that it would be up to his national security team to give him answers to the policy dilemmas raised by what he was hearing." Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Adviser to George H. W. Bush, offered his own advice to

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487 Rice, No Higher Honor, 90.
complement what Rice had already given the president privately. Scowcroft warned the president to be wary of all the voices that were advising him to act on emotion rather than planning. Scowcroft explained that in order to confront international terrorism the president needed an international coalition. Scowcroft was adamant that “Success means a coalition, a broad coalition, a willing and enthusiastic coalition. That will take unbelievable effort and entail endless frustrations. But we did it in 1990 and we can do it again.”\textsuperscript{488} Despite Scowcroft’s advice to build a sustainable response to terrorism, former CIA Director James Woolsey championed the \textit{Wall Street Journal}'s campaign to see Iraq included as a target in a war on terror. Woolsey explained that “the degree of complexity and the sophistication of the attacks against us suggest that we have enough indications of possible state involvement for the government to be carefully and vigorously investigating.”\textsuperscript{489} Furthermore, Saddam Hussein had “a festering sense of revenge for his humiliation of the Gulf War, and our conduct at, and after, the war's end has given him added hope, he believes, for vengeance.” It was becoming apparent that Bush could not confront terrorism without also confronting Saddam Hussein.

Although Bush struck a confident figure as he addressed Congress in September,.detailing his intentions to pursue terrorists around the world, the administration underwent another crisis when anthrax was discovered in letters delivered to government representatives in the beginning of October. As the news broke, pandemonium ensued as the U.S. reverted back to the fear and panic that had enveloped the nation in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11. Bush later recalled that “millions of Americans were afraid to open their mailboxes. Office mailrooms shut down. Mothers rushed to the hospital to order anthrax tests for children suffering from the common cold. Deranged hoaxsters mailed packages laced with talcum powder or flour, which exacerbated people’s fears.”\textsuperscript{490} However, the question that could not be answered was where the anthrax had come from. Saddam

\textsuperscript{490} Bush, \textit{Decision Points}, 158.
Hussein was once again considered a suspect, as in 1995 it was confirmed that the Iraqi regime had been in possession of anthrax. Former Chairman of UNSCOM Richard Butler was quick to discount Iraq as the origin of the anthrax, explaining that it was unlikely Iraq had refined anthrax into a more potent, resilient form required for the United States attacks. According to Butler, the anthrax was equally likely to have been retrieved from the ruins of the Soviet Union biological weapons laboratories.\footnote{Richard Butler, “Who made the Anthrax”, \textit{New York Times}, October 18, 2001.} Preliminary testing also suggested that the anthrax was a similar strain to what had been researched in U.S. laboratories, leading to suggestions that the terrorist attack had a domestic origin.\footnote{Rick Weiss, “Germ Tests points away from Iraq”, \textit{Washington Post}, October 30, 2001.} Despite the lack of intelligence information surrounding the origin, or even motive, of the anthrax attack it did not dampen the calls for Saddam Hussein to be immediately targeted. Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) demanded Bush detail plans for confronting Saddam Hussein, explaining:

> Whether or not Saddam is implicated directly with the anthrax attacks or the horrors of Sept. 11, he is, by any common definition, a terrorist who must be removed. A serious effort to end Saddam’s rule over Iraq should begin now with a declaration by the administration that it is America’s policy to change the Iraqi regime, and with greater financial and tactical support of the broad-based Iraqi opposition.\footnote{Joseph Lieberman, “After Bin Laden, we must target Saddam”, \textit{Wall Street Journal}, October 29, 2001.}

However attractive Lieberman’s plans were for Bush, who was himself seeking retribution for the attacks buffeting the U.S., the reality was that there was no real intelligence that could provide an answer for where the anthrax had emerged. Bush recalled that “we believed more attacks were coming, but we didn’t know when, where, or from whom.”\footnote{Bush, \textit{Decision Points}, 159.} But, Saddam Hussein remained the most credible threat to the U.S.

Weighing into the domestic debate over foreign policy in the wake of September 11 was former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who explained that a war on terror could not just
target certain people or ideals, and that it would have to target states as well. According to Kissinger, Afghanistan was just the beginning of a broader campaign and he warned “against the temptation to treat cooperation on Afghanistan as meeting the challenge and to use it as an alibi for avoiding the necessary succeeding phases.”\(^{495}\) The military model that was utilised in Afghanistan would have to evolve once Osama bin Laden was captured and the Taliban were deposed. Success would mean that “Preventive action is becoming imperative. States known to possess such facilities and to have previously used them must be obliged to open themselves to strict, conclusive international inspections with obligatory enforcement mechanisms. This applies to Iraq.”\(^{496}\) Whereas Kissinger believed Iraq should become a target in the war on terror because of strategic interests, exiled Iraqi academic Kanan Makiya argued that the U.S. had, indeed, an obligation to depose Saddam Hussein, as it was because of United States foreign policy that Saddam Hussein had retained power in Iraq.\(^{497}\) Makiya believed that “American policy, if redirected, can determine the future of that nation. It is, after all, a country that the United States went to the trouble of defeating militarily, only to stand aside as its citizens were slaughtered by the tyrant America had come to fight.”\(^{498}\) The intervention in Afghanistan gave Makiya hope that the U.S. would seriously consider an intervention in Iraq, explaining that Iraq could become a bastion for the U.S. in the Persian Gulf as “a new kind of westward-looking political order can, with help from the West, be set up in Iraq just as it was set up in Germany and Japan after World War II.”\(^{499}\) In a press conference on November 26, Bush was clear that Afghanistan was the primary focus of the war on terror, but articulated that it was just the beginning and that the mission would take as long as was necessary. However, Bush went to lengths to define who


\(^{496}\) Ibid.


\(^{499}\) Ibid.
the U.S. was at war against, explaining “Well, my message is, is that if you harbor a terrorist, you're a terrorist. If you feed a terrorist, you're a terrorist. If you develop weapons of mass destruction that you want to terrorize the world, you'll be held accountable.”

Asked if this meant Iraq might be considered a target in a global war on terror, Bush stated “Afghanistan is still just the beginning,” and warned Saddam Hussein that he would be required to readmit weapons inspectors into the country to verify that he did not pose a threat to the U.S.

The operation in Afghanistan, however, was achieving mixed results. Although there had been military victories as the Taliban government crumbled before the U.S. military, the objective of capturing Osama bin Laden remained elusive. In a press conference on December 10, Paul Wolfowitz explained that “we’ve created conditions now where, I guess, you could say we have accomplished one major objective, which is the defeat of the Taliban government…but it remains the case that large numbers of al Qaeda terrorists, including senior leaders, as well as senior leaders of the Taliban, are still at large in Afghanistan.”

Wolfowitz was confident that the success in Afghanistan was a positive step in the war on terror, refusing to acknowledge whether the operation had been stretched to incorporate more objectives, and stressed that the administration would remain focused on Afghanistan to ensure success. For the moment, this focus remained true. Richard Haass recalled that at no point was the Afghanistan operation purposely neglected in favour of shifting the war on terror to focus on Iraq. Haass noted that “the failure to capture or kill retreating al-Qaida and Taliban elements at the battle of Tora Bora was a failure born of tactics and overreliance on Afghan units and above all the ill-advised decision to limit the number and role of U.S.


forces.” However, this did not prevent rumours that Iraq was the next U.S. target. In both the Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times, Iraqi defector Khidhir Hamza, who had already been denounced by the CIA as a non-credible intelligence source, stated that Saddam Hussein had reconstituted his weapons of mass destruction programmes and hidden them throughout the country. Hamza insisted that “If intelligence estimates are correct the first tests [nuclear] could happen by 2005.” In the public imagination, the threat presented by Saddam Hussein was now seen as credible, and inside the Pentagon, Secretary Rumsfeld was exploring possibilities for going to war with Iraq.

**Iraq and the Axis of Evil**

Condoleezza Rice and speechwriter Michael Gerson expected Bush, in the State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, to push the message that the U.S. was planning “beyond the war on terror.” However, with the inclusion of the axis of evil, the impact and meaning of the address took on a different direction. Any optimism that the U.S. had made progress in the war on terror because of some success in Afghanistan was dispelled as Bush explained “our Nation is at war; our economy is in recession; and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers.” While confronting threats across the world, Bush maintained that the U.S. remained in pursuit of two objectives into the New Year – “First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And,

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504 Notes from a briefing between Secretary Rumsfeld and Central Command Chief Tommy Franks showed that the Department of Defense was well ahead in planning for war with Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld listed possible triggers for the beginning of conflict, including a dispute over weapons inspections, and added that any plans for war should be done confidentially. Secretary Rumsfeld also wrote “Unlike in Afghanistan, important to have ideas in advance about who would rule afterwards.” U.S. Department of Defense Notes from Donald Rumsfeld, [Iraq War Planning], November 27, 2001.
second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world.” Attempting to paint a picture of a threat that was difficult to capture, Bush insisted that three states could be regarded as regimes of terror: Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Bush argued that “States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.” In order to confront the threat posed by these states, Bush announced the largest increase in defense spending for twenty years. Secretary Rumsfeld, in a press conference on January 24, had already alluded to the increased defense spending by justifying the costs as a necessary measure to modernise the United States military.\footnote{Department of Defense News Briefing – Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers, United States Department of Defense, January 24, 2002.} The increased spending only exacerbated an impending recession that threatened to engulf the U.S., and Bush promised that “our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short term, so long as Congress restrains from spending and acts in a fiscally responsible manner.” What was important was that the U.S., in the wake of September 11, had found a purpose. Bush went on, “In a single instant, we realized that this will be the decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we’ve been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential.”\footnote{Ibid.} Unlike his father, Bush was able to weather the impending domestic budget crisis because of the majority Republican power in Congress and the domestic support he had consolidated in the wake of the terrorist attacks.

The ‘axis of evil’ gave a clear indication that the administration had plans for confronting Saddam Hussein. Iran and North Korea, although posing their own strategic challenges, lacked the history that was shared between the U.S. and Iraq. Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, recalling her role from 1990, added her support for Bush to confront Saddam. Thatcher suggested Bush do whatever was necessary to remove Saddam Hussein from power as he was a threat not only to the U.S., but to the world. According to Thatcher,
the only questions worth asking were “how and when, not whether, to remove [Saddam].”

There were even legal justifications emerging that legitimated a confrontation against Saddam Hussein as attorneys Lee A. Casey and David B. Rivkin Jr., former Justice Department staff under Reagan and George H. W. Bush, explained that Bush was able to legally depose Saddam. According to the attorneys, the 1991 Gulf War “has never ended and additional action against Iraq would be fully justified based on pre-existing U.N. authorization.”\(^5\)

The United Nations had verified that Iraq had possessed weapons of mass destruction, and because the United Nations could not verify that those weapons of mass destruction had been destroyed the U.S. could invoke “anticipatory self-defence” and mitigate the threat posed by Saddam. The attorneys argued “these weapons clearly are for use, either by Iraq or by its terrorist surrogates, against the U.S. and its allies.”\(^6\)

Despite this pressure, however, the administration gave no indication that Iraq was on the agenda. Vice President Dick Cheney, in an address before the Council on Foreign Relations, only stated that it was imperative for the U.S. to move against those who supported terrorism, promising that “we will work to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, or allowing them to pass those weapons to terrorists.”\(^7\)

Secretary Rumsfeld, in a Defense briefing on February 12 about progress in Afghanistan, retorted when asked about evidence that suggested Iraq was involved with terrorists that “there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don’t know we


\(^6\) Lee A. Casey, David B. Rivkin Jr., “We have the right to oust Saddam”, *Wall Street Journal*, February 27, 2002.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^7\) “In Cheney’s words: “Our role is clear””, *New York Times*, February 16, 2002.
don’t know." Secretary Rumsfeld’s answer covered all the strategic possibilities regarding Iraq, neither confirming nor denying that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

In an effort to increase domestic support regarding the administration’s tilt toward Iraq by displaying international support, Britain’s Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a televised interview that echoed Margaret Thatcher’s support for George H. W. Bush in 1991, explained his support for Bush, adding that “Those who are engaged in spreading weapons of mass destruction are engaged in an evil trade, and it is important that we make sure that we take action in respect of it…the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq poses a threat, not just to the region, but to the wider world, and I think George Bush was absolutely right to raise it.” Blair intended to meet with Bush to discuss a plan of action that included Iraq as a second stage of the war on terror. With the declaration of support for action against Iraq from abroad, ostensibly targeted at an American audience, Congressional representatives asked where they stood in any plans from the administration that concerned military action. Senate majority leader, Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD), called on Bush to clarify what the next stage of the war on terror actually entailed, in the process earning the derision from other members of Congress. Despite Daschle’s sincerity in asking for clarification from the president, there was bi-partisan indignation that the senator might question the president’s actions in war. Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) explained in the Wall Street Journal that there was bipartisan support in Congress for the actions Bush had taken.

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514 Blair wrestled with the parallels to Margaret Thatcher’s support for the 1991 war in his memoir, arguing that any decision for action, or inaction, has a consequence. Blair notes that “Inaction is a decision to maintain the status quo. Maintenance of the status quo has its own result, and usually its own dynamic. So removing Saddam Hussein had enormous consequence. Failure to remove him would not have been free of consequence.” See Tony Blair, A Journey (Hutchinson: London, 2010), 394. As for Margaret Thatcher, she consolidated her position throughout 2002, adding in June that “Saddam must go. His continued survival after comprehensively losing the Gulf War has done untold damage to the West's standing in a region where the only unforgivable sin is weakness.” See Margaret Thatcher, “Don’t Go Wobbly", Wall Street Journal, June 17, 2002.

515 Marjorie Miller, “Blair agrees Iraq is ‘a real threat’”, Los Angeles Times, March 1, 2002.

in the war on terror. Lieberman reassured that “Less than six months after the Sep. 11 attacks, our will to do what is necessary to protect our security must not start wavering. That certainly goes for Iraq, where we must deal decisively with the threat to America posed by the world’s most dangerous terrorist, Saddam Hussein.” Lieberman’s support was echoed by Bush’s approval ratings that were still at 82%, with seven out of ten respondents approving U.S. troops being used to confront terrorists overseas. This included a majority that approved of military force being used against Saddam on the condition of international support.

In a press conference on March 13, Bush told reporters that Iraq was included in discussions regarding what the administration considered to be a threat to international peace and security. Bush explained that “we will share our views of how to make the world safe. In regards to Iraq, we’re doing just that.” According to Bush, “I am deeply concerned about Iraq, and so should the American people be concerned about Iraq, and so should people who love freedom be concerned about Iraq… [Saddam Hussein] is a problem, and we’re going to deal with him.” However, part of the commitment to confronting Iraq rested on the promise of consultation with allies and Bush cultivated that image through an interview with the United Kingdom’s ITV television network. Iraq remained a central subject for conversation, and Trevor Macdonald inquired as to whether Bush had plans to attack Iraq. Bush explained that he had “made up my mind that Saddam needs to go.” There were no plans, however, on how to accomplish that goal. Bush stressed that U.S. policy was that Saddam Hussein should be removed from power and, further, it would be in the interest of the free world that this policy be supported. The open dialogue with the U.K. continued on April 6 when Bush met with Blair in Crawford, Texas. In the following press conference, and

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520 Ibid.
after commenting on the importance of the relationship between the U.S. and U.K., Blair added that “you know it has always been our policy that Iraq would be a better place without Saddam Hussein.” Blair, much like Bush, refused to comment on how that would be accomplished, but insisted that “you cannot have a situation in which he carries on being in breach of the U.N. resolutions and refusing to allow us the capability of assessing how that weapons-of-mass-destruction capability is being advanced.” Bush added, “Maybe I should be a little less direct and be a little more nuanced, and say we support regime change.”

Although Bush and Blair had avoided questions regarding military planning, the questions were not misplaced. Since February, Secretary Rumsfeld and General Tommy Franks had been devising military options for confronting Iraq. A report leaked from the Department of Defense in the New York Times showed that preliminary conclusions were that a coup was unlikely to overthrow Saddam Hussein and a war waged through local proxies would be insufficient to change the regime. The report, however, stated that “senior officials now acknowledge that any offensive would probably be delayed until early next year.” A key part of the planning suggested that “other than troops from Britain, no significant contribution of allied forces is anticipated.” The report helped make sense of Bush’s pursuit of British support and suggested a timeframe for armed action against Iraq.

The shifting attitude of the U.S. and U.K. toward a confrontation with Iraq was obvious to Hans Blix, the new chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). The beginning of 2002 had shown that Iraq was now a major U.S. focus, and by the end of March it was apparent that armed action was considered the only option to confront Saddam Hussein. Any proposed weapon inspections were just a vehicle to justify a military intervention. Secretary Rumsfeld had already explained in a press conference in April that “for the most part anything [the weapons inspectors] found was a

result of having been cued to something as a result of a defector giving them a heads-up."\(^{525}\)

The administration’s scepticism surrounding the efficiency of weapons inspections was questioned further when it was reported that Paul Wolfowitz had encouraged a CIA investigation into Hans Blix’s role as director of the International Atomic Energy Agency throughout the 80s and 90s.\(^{526}\) Despite the leaks, Secretary Rumsfeld continued to emphasise the imminent threat posed by Iraq in June when, in a speech to allies in the Persian Gulf about U.S. military operations, he maintained that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and “they continue to develop them, and they have weaponized chemical weapons…they’ve had an active program to develop nuclear weapons. It’s also clear that they are actively developing biological weapons. I don’t know what other kinds of weapons would fall under the rubric of weapons of mass destruction, but if there are more, I suspect they’re working on them, as well.”\(^{527}\) Rice, in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, added Iraq was a legitimate threat “not because you have some chain of evidence saying Iraq may have given a weapon to al-Qaeda…But it is because Iraq is one of those places that is both hostile to us, and, frankly, irresponsible and cruel enough to make this available.”\(^{528}\)

Congress, refusing to be left behind, added bipartisan support of an earlier presidential order that had authorised the CIA to take covert action to topple Iraq. House minority leader Representative Richard Gephardt (D-MO), explained that the order was “trying to bring about a change of regime, because they have continued to flout U.N. resolutions and international law. I think it is an appropriate action to take. I hope it succeeds in its quest.” House majority leader Representative Richard K. Armey (R-TX) added that the order was “justified by Iraq’s support for terrorist groups that threaten the United States and other

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\(^{526}\) Ibid.


Politically, Bush was receiving the domestic consensus on Iraq that his father had failed to create.

Even in the media there was implicit support for Bush's evolving stance against Iraq. In an editorial in the New York Times in July the editors stressed that they were confident Saddam Hussein had hidden weapons of mass destruction and the that he had intent to use them. However, “what is urgently needed now is informed and serious debate.” Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, took the opportunity to ask Bush to go into more detail about possible plans for military intervention in Iraq. However, it was not a question of whether to intervene in Iraq - it was a question of what should happen in the aftermath. Biden confided that Bush always joked with him “you agree with me on Saddam, why don’t you agree with my methods?” To which Biden would respond, “Mr. President, there’s a reason why your father stopped and didn’t go to Baghdad. He didn’t want to stay five years.” Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, added his support behind Biden, as the pair published three questions in the New York Times. First, what threat was posed by Iraq and how immediate was the danger; second, what were the options to confront the Iraqi threat; and, third, when Saddam Hussein is gone, what would be the remaining American responsibilities. The pair explained “given Iraq’s strategic location, its large oil reserves and the suffering of the Iraqi people, we cannot afford to replace a despot with chaos. We need to assess what it would take to rebuild Iraq economically and politically.” Bush, however, remained quiet. He had added nothing more to the debate since a press conference on July 8 when he maintained that “it’s the stated policy of this Government to have regime change.

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And it hasn’t changed. And we'll use all tools at our disposal to do so.” It was clear that Bush intended to pursue action against Iraq.

Unlike the Congressional effort to question Bush’s plans regarding Iraq, Brent Scowcroft and former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, speaking from their experience confronting Saddam Hussein in 1991, used the media to try and convince Bush to reconsider confronting Iraq. Richard Haass described Scowcroft’s effort as “nothing less than a ‘throw yourself in front of the train’ effort to derail the momentum toward a war that Brent judged to be both unnecessary and ill advised.” In an op-ed published in the *Wall Street Journal*, Scowcroft wrote that Saddam was “unlikely to risk his investment in weapons of mass destruction, much less his country, by handing such weapons to terrorists who would use them for their own purposes and leave Baghdad as the return address.” Scowcroft was concerned that a military intervention in Iraq would distract the U.S. from the war on terrorism, and that there was little evidence “that the United States itself is an object of [Saddam’s] aggression.” Baker expressed in an op-ed published in the *New York Times* a more understanding view of the administration’s desire to use force to depose Saddam. However, Baker believed that “we should try our best not to have to go it alone, and the president should reject the advice of those who counsel doing so. The costs in all areas will be much greater, as will the political risks, both domestic and international, if we end up going it alone or with only two other countries.” The political dimensions of any conflict that might develop between the United States and Iraq were of considerable concern, and Baker added that “we should frankly recognize that our problem in accomplishing regime change in Iraq is made more difficult by the way our policy on the Arab-Israeli dispute is perceived around the world. Sadly, in international politics, as in domestic politics, perception is sometimes more important than reality.” However, the diplomatic nuances of any possible

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conflict between the U.S. and Iraq were obscured by the administrations campaign to justify the threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

Although Scowcroft’s op-ed had earned the displeasure of Condoleezza Rice, it was Vice President Cheney who retorted in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 26. Cheney explained that “we now know Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Among other sources, we’ve gotten this from first hand testimony from defectors, including Saddam’s own son-in-law, who was subsequently murdered at Saddam’s direction.” The reality was that “armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror and a seat at a top 10 percent of the world’s oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world’s energy supplies, directly threaten America’s friends throughout the region and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail.” With our help, added Cheney, “a liberated Iraq can be a great nation once again.” Cheney ignored the advice offered by Baker and Scowcroft, choosing, instead, to go further with this confrontation with Saddam Hussein, unlike in 1991.

Bush rode the momentum generated by Cheney’s speech, continuing to justify the militant U.S. posture in remarks during press conferences. One such occasion was on September 2, alongside Tony Blair, when Bush explained that “as you know, our Government in 1998 – action that my administration has embraced – decided that this regime was not going to honor its commitments to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. The Clinton administration supported regime change. Many members of the current United States Senate supported regime change. My administration still supports regime change. There’s all kinds of ways to

539 Ibid.
540 Ibid.
change regimes...we owe it to future generations to deal with this problem." Bush connected his administration’s tilt toward Saddam Hussein to the precedents set by previous administrations, especially the 1998 decision by Clinton to declare that it was U.S. policy to support regime change in Iraq. Despite Bush’s confidence in his administration’s plans, his approval rating had been steadily decreasing throughout the year. By early September, Bush had an approval rating of 63%, with only 37% of respondents expressing confidence that Bush would make correct decisions. However, 61% supported a pre-emptive attack on Iraq. Increasing this domestic support was Bush’s address at the United Nations General Assembly on September 12. The speech was applauded for redefining U.S. international objectives, but was focused toward Iraq. James Baker, after the speech, wrote “the question is no longer why the United States believes force is necessary to implement resolutions involving Iraq, but why the United Nations, after years of inaction, does not now agree.” However, Baker was also thankful that Bush had sought out assistance from the United Nations, adding “win or lose, going to the United Nations will also help the president win the support of the American people and, therefore, of Congress, which is politically desirable, if not legally necessary, for any major military action.” The appeal to the United Nations, however, was a move to secure further evidence of the presumed threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

Baker’s optimism turned out premature as the Bush administration released on September 17 the National Security Strategy of the United States. Just as the words ‘axis of evil’ had caught the attention of observers when Bush had given his State of the Union address in January, so too did the word ‘pre-emption.’ The reframing of the threat that Iraq posed to the U.S. was immediate, explained Phillip Zelikow, as “by introducing ‘pre-emption,’ the U.S."

541 George W. Bush, Remarks prior to discussions with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an exchange with reporters at Camp David, Maryland, September 7, 2002.
544 Ibid.
government had, somewhat inadvertently, reframed the argument and shouldered a new burden, volunteering to prove that the outlaw posed an ‘imminent’ threat.\textsuperscript{545} That Bush supported regime change in Iraq was beyond doubt before the National Security Strategy had been released. However, the National Security Strategy described how regime change might take place. Secretary Rumsfeld, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, outlined the case against Saddam Hussein. Reciting the litany of resolutions that Iraq had ignored over a period of eleven years, Rumsfeld concluded that “no terrorist state poses a greater and more immediate threat to the security of our people and the stability of the world than the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.”\textsuperscript{546} Rumsfeld’s testimony was reinforced by Secretary Powell, who had appeared before the House International Relations Committee. Powell added that “from the very beginning…we’ve viewing this as a liberation”\textsuperscript{547} and that the administration understood the implications of intervening in Iraq, promising that that United States “would have obligations to see it through.”\textsuperscript{548} Proving that the U.S. was not deterred from its militant posture toward Iraq, Bush dismissed reports that Iraq had accepted the United Nations demands to readmit weapons inspectors. Bush viewed the move as Saddam Hussein’s latest ploy to lead the international community astray, and promised that “one of the jobs of the United States has is to remind people about not only the threat but the fact that his defiance has weakened the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{549} By the end of September it was clear that Bush was moving toward a decision to confront Saddam. In a press conference, following a meeting with congressional leaders in late September and before a resolution was sent to Congress to authorise the use of force against Iraq, Bush explained that “Each passing day could be the one on which the Iraqi regime gives anthrax or VX – nerve gas – or, someday, a nuclear weapon to a terrorist ally. We refuse to live in

\textsuperscript{545}Zelikow, “U.S. Strategic Planning in 2001-02”, 115.

\textsuperscript{546}Maggie Farley, John Hendren, “Rumsfeld makes case for War”, \textit{Los Angeles Times}, September 19, 2002


\textsuperscript{548}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{549}George W. Bush, \textit{Remarks following a meeting with congressional leaders and an exchange with reporters}, September 18, 2002.
this future of fear. Democrats and Republicans refuse to live in a future of fear.” With Congressional approval, Bush could put in motion plans to confront the threat the Saddam Hussein was believed to possess.  

**Authorising the Use of Force**

The decision to go to war with Iraq was initiated in October when Bush approached Congress to vote on using force to confront Saddam Hussein. After a meeting with Congressional leaders on October 1, Bush was confident that a resolution would pass through both the House and Senate with little opposition. Bush explained to reporters that “We’ll continue to work with the Members of Congress. But I don’t want to get a resolution which ties my hands, a resolution which is weaker than that which was passed out of the Congress in 1998.” Bush continued the next day to build a bipartisan case for confronting Saddam Hussein when he announced the agreement between Congressional leaders on a joint resolution. Bush stressed that “We know the designs of the Iraqi regime. In defiance of pledges to the U.N., it has stockpiled biological and chemical weapons. It is rebuilding the facilities used to make those weapons,” and that “Countering Iraq’s threat is also a central

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551 The U.S. media evolved in relation to Bush’s stance on Iraq and a good example is writer, and commentator, Christopher Hitchens, who was prolific in his contribution to the media in the U.S. in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001. He wrote, in great detail, about the necessity of the military operation in Afghanistan and the war on terror. However, his contributions regarding an intervention in Iraq evolve from September 2002, until February 2003. Hitchens begins by describing the “debt” owed by the U.S. to persecuted Iraqis and Kurds that could only be repaid with the ouster of Saddam Hussein. He criticises Bush, in October 2002, for not being proactive in detailing the crimes of Saddam Hussein, and the administrations intended response, and by the end of the month he is denouncing the critics of war and labelling the Left as “affectless, neutralist, smirking” supporters of isolationism. By February, Hitchens wishes the anti-war demonstrations would be washed away and welcomes with open arms the inevitable military intervention in Iraq. See ed. Simon Cottee and Thomas Cushman, *Christopher Hitchens and His Critics: Terror, Iraq, and the Left* (New York University Press, 2008).

552 George W. Bush, *Remarks following a meeting with Congressional Leaders and an exchange with reporters*, October 1, 2002.
commitment on the war on terror. We know Saddam Hussein has longstanding and ongoing ties to international terrorists." According to Bush, then, “America’s leadership and willingness to use force, confirmed by the Congress, is the best way to ensure compliance and avoid conflict.” In a final push to consolidate domestic support for the Congressional vote, Bush followed his earlier statements with an address to the nation on October 7, just before the joint resolution was introduced to Congress. In the address Bush stressed that Iraq stood alone from other international threats because “it gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place. Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction are controlled by a murderous tyrant who has already used chemical weapons to kill thousands of people. This same tyrant has tried to dominate the Middle East, has invaded and brutally occupied a small neighbour, has struck other nations without warning, and holds an unrelenting hostility toward the United States.” According to Bush, the U.S. knew “that the regime has produced thousands of tons of chemical agents, including mustard gas, sarin nerve gas, VX nerve gas,” and that “surveillance photos reveal that the regime is rebuilding facilities that it had used to produce chemical and biological weapons.” Worth additional concern were Iraq’s ballistic missile capabilities, Saddam Hussein’s links to international terrorist groups, and Iraq’s unconfirmed nuclear weapons manufacturing capability. Bush, with certainty, addressed the nation that “Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.” Bush explained that confrontation was necessary as a “failure to act would embolden other tyrants, allow terrorists access to new weapons and new resources, and make blackmail a permanent feature of world events. The United Nations would betray the purpose of its founding and prove irrelevant to the problems of our time. And through its inaction, the United States

\footnote{George W. Bush, \textit{Remarks announcing bipartisan agreement on a joint resolution to authorize the use of United States armed forces against Iraq}, October 2, 2002.}
would resign itself to a future of fear.” It appeared as though Bush had satisfied the domestic demands that Saddam Hussein be deposed.

By the time Bush had addressed the nation on October 7, the Senate had already begun to debate the authorisation of the use of force to depose Saddam Hussein. Despite the confident statements of Congressional leaders that there was bipartisan support for the president, there still existed dissent in the Senate. Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), who had confronted George H. W. Bush’s similar decision in 1991 when he voted against using force against Saddam Hussein, spoke out against the consensus of the Senate, asking “why now?” Byrd wondered what had changed in the last year that had elevated Saddam Hussein into an imminent threat that required an immediate response from the United States, arguing that “When the President and his advisers are pressed for clarity, they have responded with evasive and confusing references to the dangers of terrorism which they now seem to think has more to do with Saddam Hussein than Osama bin Laden.” Byrd was appalled that Congress was willing to provide Bush with a blank cheque to conduct war despite the lack of substantiated evidence implicating Saddam Hussein in terrorism, and warned the Senate that “The President’s military doctrine will give him a free hand to justify almost any military action with unsubstantiated allegations and arbitrary risk assessments, and Congress is about to rubberstamp that doctrine and simply step out of the way.” However, despite Byrd’s measured appraisal of the resolution, he was very much in the minority. In the same session, Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) added that “as one who fought in China [during World War II] I see the next Hitler in Saddam Hussein.” Stevens’ experience justified his belief that the situation with Iraq was the most serious since the end of World War II.

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554 George W. Bush, Address to the nation on Iraq from Cincinnati, Ohio, October 7, 2002.
556 Senator Ted Stevens, Authorization of the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq, Senate Congressional Record, October 7, 2002, S10022.
On October 8, as the debate continued, Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) expanded his justifications for supporting the resolution to authorise the use of force. Referring to Byrd’s question, Lieberman retorted “Why not earlier? Why not over the course of the last decade, when Saddam Hussein, to our knowledge, continued to build up his weapons of mass destruction and the most dangerous and threatening means to deliver them on targets near and far, constantly ignoring and violating resolutions of the United Nations, growing more ominous a threat to his neighbors and to the world?” In fact, argued Lieberman, Bush’s insistence to confront Saddam Hussein was merely the realisation of a military conflict that the U.S. had been involved in since 1991. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) added to Lieberman’s rationalisation by stressing that Bush was not forcing the issue to confront Saddam Hussein, that it was Saddam Hussein himself who was forcing the U.S. into action, and Bush was not resorting to war as a first option, but as a last option. Senator John Kerry (D-MA), speaking the following day, summarised the position of the Senate succinctly when he added “When I vote to give the President of the United States the authority to use force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam Hussein, it is because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a threat, and a grave threat, to our security and that of our allies in the Persian Gulf region. I will vote yes because I believe it is the best way to hold Saddam Hussein accountable.” Unlike the situation in 1991, the support in the Senate for the use of force against Saddam Hussein was overwhelming.

In the House of Representatives, the debate was just as broad. However, with the Republican majority, there was little chance that Bush would face much opposition to the joint resolution. The debate fell along the same lines as in the Senate, with some representatives arguing the merits of waiting for United Nations inspections to take place,
while others worried about the authority that was being given to the president to wage war. In one case, Representative Paul Ryan (D-WI) cited former intelligence analyst Kenneth Pollack’s *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* as definitive evidence as to why Bush should be authorised to use force against Saddam Hussein. Ryan described Pollack as “a former analyst on Iraq for the Central Intelligence Agency who served on the National Security Council during the Clinton Administration [and] one of the foremost experts on Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime.” As a result of the overwhelming pressure placed on Congress by both the administration and public opinion, Bush received a positive vote. In the Senate, the resolution was passed by a margin of 77 to 23. In the House, the margin was 296 to 133. In an announcement that marked the signing of the resolution, Bush remarked that it was the first step in eradicating an international threat as “confronting the threat posed by Iraq is necessary, by whatever means that requires. Either the Iraqi regime will give up its weapons of mass destruction, or for the sake of peace, the United States will lead a global coalition to disarm that regime.”

Using the Congressional vote as a springboard, Bush detailed U.S. demands for Iraq in order to avoid a military confrontation that included the resumption of weapons inspections, adding that this time Iraqi scientists were to be allowed to leave the country for interviews with inspectors and Saddam Hussein had to cut all ties to international terrorists. These demands, stressed Bush, were non-negotiable, and it was up to the United Nations Security Council to see them satisfied.

Iraq’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammed Aldouri, responded to the Congressional debate by writing his own op-ed in the *New York Times*. Aldouri argued that Bush had not allowed adequate time for the United Nations to inspect Iraq, stressing that “we are not asking the people of the United States or of any member state of the United Nations to trust in our word, but to send the weapons inspectors to our country to look

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560 Representative Paul Ryan, Authorization of the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq, House Congressional Record, October 9, 2002, Part Two, H7728.

wherever they wish unconditionally…we could never make this claim with such openness if we did not ourselves know there is nothing to be found.”

Mohammed el-Baradei, was also prompted by the Congressional debate to question, in the *Washington Post*, how accurate Bush’s intelligence had been when he made the claims regarding Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. El-Baradei explained that the International Atomic Energy Agency had, in the past, “neutralised Iraq’s nuclear program. We confiscated its weapon usable material. We destroyed, removed or rendered harmless all its facilities and equipment relevant to nuclear weapons production. And while we did not claim absolute certainty, we were confident that we had not missed any significant component of Iraq’s nuclear program.” However, claims that Bush had misled the American people were dismissed, and Senator John McCain reiterated his endorsement of military action to counter the op-ed of Ambassador Aldouri and el-Baradei. McCain explained that “The feckless pursuit of accommodation with regimes that scorn our reasonableness and revile our purpose is no substitute for a policy that matches the menace posed to America with the means and the will to confront it.” Driving home the argument, McCain more specifically addressed el-Baradei’s complaints, stating that “our determination to confront Saddam Hussein openly and with all necessary means demonstrates a freedom to act against an enemy that does not – yet – possess nuclear weapons.”

In late October, the *New York Times* reported that Paul Wolfowitz was overseeing an intelligence unit in the Pentagon that was focusing its analysis on Iraq. Although the unit was not officially recognised, Wolfowitz justified the unit’s existence as “a phenomenon in intelligence work, that people who are pursuing a certain hypothesis will see certain facts that others won’t, and not see other facts others will…the lens through which you’re looking for facts affects what you look for.”

Richard Haass later wrote that intelligence had lost its way in regards to Iraq, explaining “not once in all my meetings in my years in government did an intelligence analyst or anyone else

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563 Mohamed el-Baradei, “Inspections are the key”, *Washington Post*, October 21, 2002.
for that matter argue openly or take me aside and say privately that Iraq possessed nothing in the way of weapons of mass destruction. If the emperor had no clothes, no one thought so or was prepared to say so.” 566 Instead, as was seen by Wolfowitz’s intelligence unit at the Pentagon, the administration was searching for information that would support its decision to confront Iraq.

The support Bush had received from Congress during the debate to authorise the use of force against Iraq helped the Republicans to secure mid-term elections in early November. Focusing on Congressional representatives who had challenged Bush over national security, and framed around the September 11 attacks, the Republicans maintained their majority throughout the Congress. In a news conference following the election result, Bush refocused his attention on pressuring the international community to fall behind the U.S. in the use of force in Iraq. Bush explained that “the only way in my judgement to deal with Saddam Hussein is to bring the international community together to convince him to disarm. But if he’s not going to disarm, we’ll disarm him in order to make the world a more peaceful place.” 567 Bush stressed that the United Nations had to step up to its responsibilities and ensure that Iraq’s defiance did not go unanswered, stating “it’s very important the U.N. be a successful international body because the threats that we face now require more cooperation than ever.” However, reminded Bush, the key to upholding the United Nations’ responsibilities was that any resolution regarding Iraq had to agree on “serious consequences.” 568 On November 8, a resolution passed through the United Nations Security Council and codified the demands of the U.S. into a new weapons inspection regime. Bush rationalised the resolution as a final test, stating that “Iraq must now, without delay or negotiations, fully disarm, welcome full inspections, and fundamentally change the approach it has taken for more than a decade.” However, Bush also warned that “The United States of America will not live at the mercy of any group or regime that has the motive and seeks the

568 Ibid.
power to murder Americans on a massive scale.”^{569} Although the resolution lacked explicit authorisation for the use of force and, instead, only warned that action would be taken in the case of ‘material breach’, Secretary Powell commented that it had given the weapons inspectors the regime they needed to verify Iraq was free of weapons of mass destruction. According to Powell, “this is not just a matter between Iraq and the United States, but between Iraq and a united world.” However, Powell also warned Iraq that there should be no doubt that the U.S. would not “shrink from war if that is the only way to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.”^{570} At this stage, the decision to intervene in Iraq had already been made by Bush.

In an effort to show that the administration had plans post-Saddam Hussein, Bush insisted that the sixty-five delegates who comprised of the exiled Iraqi government meet for a conference. The intended purpose of the meeting was to reach a consensus on support for Bush’s actions toward Iraq among Iraqi exiles. However, the conference was not a success as a number of delegates left the final session, claiming, “The conference had been ‘cooked’ from the start by the United States.” There were reports that “American officials [were] on hand to monitor the conference, cajoling its leaders in private to meet the goals set by Washington while ensuring that they did not overstep the American-drawn boundaries.” The only conclusion that the conference could agree upon was that “the United States leave governance of a post-Hussein Iraq to Iraqis and [reject] an American proposal to install a temporary United States military government.”^{571} Adding to the inconclusive conference was an op-ed by Representative Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Representative Chuck Hagel (R-NE), who warned that the U.S. would have to remain in Iraq to ensure stability. The representatives wrote that “coalition forces will remain in large numbers to stabilize Iraq and support civilian administration. That presence will be necessary for several years, given the

vacuum there, which a divided Iraqi opposition will have trouble filling and which some new Iraqi military strongman must not fill.\textsuperscript{572} Despite any desire the Iraqi exiles had harboured to see the U.S. leave Iraq immediately after an intervention, it was unlikely to occur in reality.

**Going to War with Iraq**

Although there were protests against a war with Iraq in January, 2003, Bush’s decision to go to war was already made, evidenced by the escalating U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf. The protests highlighted a grassroots discontent at the actions of both the administration and Congress. According to reports, “tens of thousands of protestors representing a diverse coalition for peace” had gathered for blocks in Washington DC.\textsuperscript{573} The *New York Times* remarked in an editorial that “Mr. Bush and his war cabinet would be wise to see the demonstrators as a clear sign that noticeable numbers of Americans no longer feel obliged to salute the administration’s plans because of the shock of Sept. 11 and that many harbor serious doubts about his march to war.”\textsuperscript{574} Understanding that the administration might be losing support before hostilities even began, Rice wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* titled “Why we know Iraq is lying.” Rice stressed that “There is no mystery to voluntary disarmament. Countries that decide to disarm lead inspectors to weapons and production sites, answer questions before they are asked, state publically and often the intention to disarm and urge their citizens to cooperate.” Iraq had been afforded ample opportunity to declare their weapons of mass destruction, and the documentation Iraq had provided to the Security Council failed “to account for or explain Iraq’s efforts to get uranium from abroad, its manufacture of specific fuel for ballistic missiles it claims not to have, and the gaps previously identified by the United Nations in Iraq’s accounting for more


than two tons of the raw materials needed to produce thousands of gallons of anthrax and other biological weapons.” Rice’s op-ed was part of a broader public campaign to invigorate support for Bush, a media strategy that Rice later described as a mistake. Rice recalled that “in support of the public case, the intelligence community began declassifying pieces of information in order to describe the emerging threat fully…as a result of this practice, these intelligence ‘nuggets’ became too much of the focus of the arguments about the dangers of Saddam. The entire case came to rest on those isolated intelligence statements about his program.” This became particularly obvious when Bush gave his State of the Union later that month.

On January 28, Bush reinforced the case against Iraq. According the Rice, “the President knew that we were likely headed to war and wanted to give as detailed an assessment to the American people as possible.” Bush began by reciting the successes of the war on terror, explaining that “more than 3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries. Many others have met a different fate. Let’s put it this way: They are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies.” Despite these successes, Saddam Hussein was still a continuing threat, “A brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism, with great potential wealth [and] will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States.” Reciting a litany of intelligence ‘nuggets,’ Bush stated that the U.S. believed Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce biological and chemical weapons, and the technology needed to deliver them. Furthermore, “The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa,” and “intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminium tubes suitable for nuclear weapons productions.” The final intelligence ‘nugget’ was Bush’s assertion that “Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and

576 Rice, No Higher Honour, 196-197.
577 Ibid. 199.
statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaida. “Rice later regretted not intervening in the preparation of the State of the Union address, explain that “knowing the uncertainties that always attend intelligence and how it is especially true in intelligence that the whole is worth more than the sum of the parts, I should have resisted.”579 But, Bush went on confidently, ending his State of the Union with the promise that “if Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him.”580 Despite Bush’s assertions, there were still fluctuations in his domestic support.

Bush’s approval rating was hovering around 56%. However, there was popular support for military action against Iraq, albeit under some caveats. Around 65% of respondents supported a military strike if the United Nations Security Council authorised the use of force, with only 30% supporting a unilateral attack. But, if Secretary Powell could produce definitive evidence that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction at the United Nations Security Council, then the support rallied up to 72%581. On February 5, Powell did just that, presenting the U.S. case against Iraq to the United Nations. Richard Haass, who had been involved in the preparation of the presentation, argued that “by the end, all involved felt confident of what was in the text….People were exhausted, but the exhaustion was mixed with satisfaction, as the individuals I knew best believed they had prevailed in insisting on intellectual honesty, with the result that what Powell would say to the Security Council and the world would be accurate.”582 The result of the presentation to observers, both outside and inside the United States, was that it was a home run. Bush had no doubts as to the tenacity of Powell’s presentation, thanking him in a speech the following day for “his careful

579 Ibid. 198.
and powerful presentation of the facts.” However, the purpose of Bush’s follow-up to Powell’s presentation was to demand an ultimatum of both the United Nations Security Council and Iraq. According to Bush, Saddam Hussein had not cooperated with weapons inspectors with his November declaration and had, therefore, made his decision not to cooperate. Bush explained “now the nations of the Security Council must make their own [choice]...Having made its demands, the Security Council must not back down when those demands are defied and mocked by a dictator.” Either the United Nations Security Council introduce a final resolution that would enforce its demands, or the United States would see that they were fulfilled unilaterally.

There was an immediate reaction, both domestically and globally, to Powell’s presentation. Richard Haass, explaining the rationale as to why Powell was chosen to give the presentation, wrote “People around the country and the world trusted him, in part because of his record, in part because he was viewed as practical and reasonable rather than ideological. Many outsiders were clearly taking their lead from him.” Throughout the media, foreign leaders expressed their support for Bush to the American people. Angela Merkel, leader of the opposition party in Germany, expressed her support for the United States. This was despite Germany’s Prime Minister Joscha Schroeder’s apparent lack of support for Bush. Merkel declared that Germany was committed to the U.S. and explained that there were two factors apparent in Powell’s speech – “first, the danger from Iraq is not fictitious but real. Second, working not against but jointly with the United States, Europe must take more responsibility for maintaining internal pressure on Saddam Hussein.” According to Merkel, “peace is the supreme good, for the sake of which every effort has to be made. But it is also true that responsible leadership must on no account trade the

584 Ibid.
genuine peace of the future for the deceptive peace of the present.”

Writing an equally supportive op-ed was East Timor’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Jose Ramos-Horta, who had shared a Nobel peace prize in 1996. Contrary to the peaceful accolades, Ramos-Horta compared the situation in Iraq to that of East Timor’s fight for independence from Indonesia, and explained that “Many families were entirely wiped out during the decades of occupation by Indonesia and the war of resistance against it. The United States and other Western nations contributed to this tragedy. Some bear a direct responsibility because they helped Indonesia by providing military aid. Others were accomplices through indifference and silence. But all redeemed themselves.” In 1999, a global peace keeping force finally came to East Timor and helped establish independence. Ramos-Horta wondered why Iraq should not be offered the same chance at liberation, criticising the anti-war movement and explaining that if they succeeded in stalling the war they would have to accept that they “helped keep a ruthless dictator in power and explain itself to the tens of thousands of his victims.”

Even Australian Prime Minister John Howard wrote of his support for Bush. According to Howard, intervening in Iraq was the correct decision as “the potential cost of doing nothing is clearly much greater than the cost of doing something.” Howard promised that Australia would be allied with the U.S. in eradicating the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Despite pledges of international support there was a swelling of dissent. In New York, there had been between 100,000 - 400,000 demonstrators protesting against a war with Iraq, whereas in London there were 500,000 - 750,000 in Hyde Park. There were even more protests scattered among the capitals of the world.

588 John Howard, “You can’t ‘contain’ Saddam”, *Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2003. John Howard’s support was useful to Bush for domestic, as well as diplomatic, reasons. Howard’s vocal support in the American media supported Bush’s contention that allies were behind U.S. decisions to confront Iraq. However, the long history of the ANZUS treaty meant Australia would aid the U.S. in any conflict, and Howard was not about to renge on that precedent. See Joseph Siracusa, “John Howard, Australia, and the Coalition of the Willing,” *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring (2006).
Just as there was an outpouring of international support in the American media, so too was there domestic support among the major newspapers. In the wake of Secretary Powell’s presentation at the United Nations Security Council, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that “the Powell evidence will be persuasive to anyone who is still persuadable. It proves that Saddam is defying the will of the U.N. one more time, hiding his weapons in the hope that the world will again lose its will to stop him.” As a statement, the *Wall Street Journal* added that “we do not want to gamble – and no American President can afford to gamble – the future of U.S. security on the hope that Saddam will not link arms with al Qaeda or other terrorists.”

However, the *New York Times* was more hesitant to back Bush, adding that the newspaper’s support for military action was conditional. The *New York Times* explained that it was disconcerting that the United Nations Security Council could not find a consensus on the situation in Iraq. The newspaper believed that Bush should encourage other powers in the Security Council to “approve a resolution setting a date for Iraq to comply with disarmament demands or face the likelihood of united military action.” Commenting directly on Powell’s presentation, the *New York Times* was unpersuaded that Saddam Hussein posed an immediate threat to the U.S.

By February 26, it was clear that Bush had settled on a military confrontation with Saddam Hussein and was now considering the benefits of a liberated Iraq in the Middle East. In a

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591 *Ibid.* The *Wall Street Journal*’s contrasting reports in its European publication highlight the different language between the different audiences. Where the New York version of the *Wall Street Journal* is adamant that Powell’s presentation needs no further discussion, the European version seeks arraying evidence presented by Powell before the European audience. In “The Smoking Gun”, *Wall Street Journal*, Europe, February 6, 2003, the editorial explains “The evidence Secretary Powell put on display, of mobile factories for producing chemical and biological weapons, ties with terrorists and nuclear aspirations was derived from a variety of sources, including communications intercepts and satellite photos. It was plentiful and convincing.” Further, the presentation “only added to the enormous swing of support behind President Bush from across Europe.” This support from Europe was stated in a piece published in the same newspaper in New York in late January by a cohort of European leaders who had sided with Bush. France and Germany were the notable exclusions. See Jose Maria Aznar, Jose-Manuel Durao Barroso, Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair, Vaclav Havel, Peter Medgyesst, Leszek Miller, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “United we stand”, *Wall Street Journal*, January 30, 2003.
speech at the American Enterprise Institute, reiterating that Iraq was a danger that had to be confronted, Bush added that “a free Iraq would [benefit] the Iraqi people themselves…their lives and their freedom matter little to Saddam Hussein, but Iraqi lives and freedom matter greatly to us.” Moving beyond the immediate objective of disarming Iraq, Bush went on to say that “the nation of Iraq, with its proud heritage, abundant resources, and skilled and educated people, is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom.” Therefore, according to Bush, confronting and deposing Saddam Hussein could help spread democracy throughout the Middle East, going so far as to say that “Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace and set in motion progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state.”

The American Enterprise Institute speech had been one last chance for Bush to justify the U.S. desire to confront Saddam Hussein. Rice admitted that by late February, "Steve Hadley and I realized belatedly that the President had not made the broader argument. Somehow all that Saddam had done and what he meant to stability in the Middle East was getting lost in the discussion." Therefore, the reorientation of Bush’s speech to stress the liberation of Iraq was an attempt to illustrate the broader objectives of the U.S., objectives that went beyond the matter of weapons of mass destruction.

Speaking with the press only days before inspectors reported to the Security Council on March 8, Bush tried to reassure reporters that the U.S. was still pursuing a diplomatic solution in the United Nations, but war appeared inevitable. Bush stressed that “Saddam Hussein has had 12 years to disarm. He is deceiving people…he’s trying to buy time.” The U.S. regarded Iraq a threat, and Bush insisted that his job was to protect the American people. However, there was an undercurrent of discontent about the lack of support from the United Nations. Asked if the U.S. would be seen as defying the United Nations should there be a confrontation without Security Council approval, Bush responded “I’m confident the

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594 Rice, No Higher Honour, 199.
American people understand that when it comes to our security, if we need to act, we will act, and we really don’t need United Nations approval to do so…as we head into the 21st century, Mark, when it comes to our security, we really don’t need anybody’s permission.”

It was clear that Bush did not regard United Nations Security Council approval as a precondition to act against Iraq. Mohamed el-Baradei, however, disagreed with Bush’s assessment, and took the time to clarify the progress of IAEA inspections in the *Wall Street Journal*. El-Baradei argued that the president had deliberately misrepresented the inspection process, explaining:

> The IAEA’s inspectors have systematically examined the contents and operations of all Iraqi buildings and facilities that were identified through satellite surveillance as having been modified or newly constructed since December 1998, when inspections were brought to a halt. They have determined the whereabouts and functionality of Iraq’s known ‘dual-use’ equipment – that is, equipment that has legitimate industrial uses, such as precision machining, but that could also be used for the high-precision manufacture of components relevant to a nuclear-weapons program.

El-baradei added that “throughout the past three months, Iraqi authorities have provided access to all facilities without conditions and without delay and have made documents available in response to inspectors’ requests.” El-Baradei was confident enough to claim that “to date, we have found no substantiated evidence of the revival in Iraq of a nuclear-weapons program – the most lethal of the weapons of mass destruction.”


596 Mohamed el-Baradei, “Let Us Inspect”, *Wall Street Journal*, March 7, 2003. In the European edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, el-Baradei’s piece was retitled “What I will tell the U.N. Today About Iraq”. This is another example of the different impressions shown to different audiences through the title of the op-ed. To the American audience, el-Baradei is seen to be appealing. To the European audience, el-Baradei is declaring. The contents of the piece remain the same. Mohamed el-Baradei, “What I will Tell the U.N. Today About Iraq”, *Wall Street Journal*, Europe, March 7, 2003.
immediate threat posed by Saddam Hussein, it did not alter the decision to go to war with Iraq.

By March 16, a joint press conference with Bush, Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, and Prime Minister Tony Blair was held as the leaders met in Azores, Portugal, to discuss plans to confront Iraq. Bush stressed that “Iraq’s liberation would be the beginning, not the end, of our commitment to its people...Iraq has the potential to be a great nation...we’re committed to the goal of a unified Iraq, with democratic institutions of which members of all ethnic and religious groups are treated with dignity and respect.” Despite Bush’s confidence, Blair stressed that the decision to confront Iraq was made reluctantly. Blair, optimistically, stated that “we will do all we can in the short time that remains to make a final round of contacts, to see whether there is a way through this impasse. But we are in the final stages, because after 12 years of failing to disarm him, now is the time when we have to decide.” On March 17, Bush addressed the nation and officially declared that diplomatic efforts had failed to secure Iraqi disarmament. Bush stated clearly that “the United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security. That duty falls to me as Commander in Chief, by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep.” Bush’s decision did not allow for any more time to be spent on diplomatic overtures, demanding that “Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing.” Bush emphasised that going to war with Iraq was a chief objective in the war on terror, and added that “terrorists and terror states do not reveal these threats with fair notice, in formal declarations. And responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self-defense; it is suicide.

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597 George W. Bush, Press conference with Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal, President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in the Azores, Portugal, March 16, 2003.
598 Ibid.
The security of the world requires disarming of Saddam Hussein now.\textsuperscript{600} Across the U.S., Bush was already experiencing increased support as Americans rallied around the president. News poll figures showed that 61% of respondents agreed that the U.S. should attack Iraq, and Bush’s approval rating climbed from 54% to 62%, with six in ten Americans believing that Bush had adequately explained the risks involved.\textsuperscript{601} In the \textit{New York Times}, another poll showed that 57% of Americans were under the impression Saddam Hussein “helped the terrorists in the Sept. 11 attacks.”\textsuperscript{602}

As this chapter has illustrated, the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 began in earnest as Bush rebounded from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to rally the U.S. to the war on terror. However, Bush had to rely on a domestic campaign in order to propel his foreign policy. Before the terrorist attacks, Bush’s administration was earning a reputation for fickle foreign policy decisions. However, after the terrorist attacks Bush’s foreign policy found purpose. A war on terror was declared, and Afghanistan became the first target, supported by the international community and an American public searching for retribution. Within the rebirth of Bush’s foreign policy was Saddam Hussein. Domestically, Saddam Hussein was reviled and his continued leadership was a point of contention for Congress and the American people. Bush’s war on terror helped to legitimate the domestic derision of Saddam Hussein, and offered a policy solution to his undesirable leadership. Bush’s pursuit of terror, buttressed by the support from Congress, evolved into the decision to go to war with Iraq. To this end, Bush went to considerable lengths in order to establish

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\textsuperscript{600} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{601} John Harwood, “Countdown to War: Public Support for War climbs in the U.S., U.K”, \textit{Wall Street Journal}, Europe, March 19, 2003. The News Poll results in March, 2003, reflected the long held belief in America that Saddam Hussein would have to be forced out of Iraq. Ole R. Holsti notes that “Pew, Gallup, and CBS/\textit{New York Times} surveys between 1992 and 2003 found majorities ranging from 52 percent to 74 percent favouring the use of force to remove Saddam, although in no case did as many as two respondents in five favour doing so ‘even if allies won’t join.’ Thus the administration’s active campaign to link Iraq with weapons of mass destruction and al Qaeda found an audience ready to believe the worst about the Baghdad regime.” Ole R. Holsti, \textit{American Public Opinion and the Iraq War} (University of Michigan, 2011), 133.
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the reality of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, and his emphasis that Saddam Hussein’s past *intentions* to acquire weapons of mass destruction were shown to indicate his *capabilities* to attack the U.S. and firmly consolidated public support for Bush’s decision to go to war.
Chapter Six

The Diplomatic Origins of the Decision to Go to War with Iraq, 2001-2003

“Iraq is a centrepiece of American foreign policy, influencing how the United States is viewed in the region and around the world…Because events in Iraq have been set in motion by American decisions and actions, the United States has both a national and a moral interest in doing what it can to give Iraqis an opportunity to avert anarchy.”

George W. Bush, unlike his father, lacked the diplomatic acumen to rank among the great foreign policy presidents of the United States. However, events would dictate that Bush, just like his father, would face a shift in the international order that demanded an unprecedented diplomatic response. And in the middle of these events emerged Saddam Hussein as a threat to the U.S. The diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 began well before Bush was elected president in 2000 and his administration had reviewed its policy priorities. As a result, the policy of the U.S. towards Iraq evolved in the wake of the war with Iraq in 1991. Thus, the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq indicate that the decision was based on the precedent set by past administrations, especially the administration of George H. W. Bush. The impetus to confront Saddam Hussein was expedited by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. It was in the aftermath of these attacks that Bush embraced the opportunity to seek retribution and to confront those believed responsible. As the threat of terrorism to U.S. national security was conflated, so too were there evaluations of the threats that already confronted the U.S., in particular, Iraq.

As an illustration of how far the U.S. had evolved in its foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, Bush interpreted Saddam Hussein’s past intentions to pursue weapons of mass destruction to mean that the Iraqi leader had the capabilities to achieve his goals, and concluded that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the national security of the U.S. In the end, Bush decided to neutralise that threat by going to war with Iraq.

In order to explore the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq, this chapter will begin at the end of the war with Iraq in 1991 and establish the precedent of diplomatic conduct toward Iraq established by President George H. W. Bush and overseen by President Bill Clinton. The international weapons inspections and sanctions remained intact for several years before encountering difficulties and confronting changing political trends. As a consequence, the consensus that George H. W. Bush cherished in the United Nations Security Council changed, and the fundamental tenets of the international weapons inspections and sanctions, constructed around containing and dismantling any threat posed by Iraq, broke down as a humanitarian crisis emerged in Iraq throughout the 1990s. In 2001, George W. Bush was elected president of the U.S. and embraced the evolving United Nations Security Council consensus toward Iraq, looking to exert U.S. influence. This effort was cut short on September 11, when terrorist attacks rocked the U.S. and a new threat emerged at the beginning of the twenty first century, presenting itself as a strategic challenge to U.S. superpower. Dismissing the pretences of ‘new world order’ diplomacy that encouraged consensus-driven leadership, Bush announced a war on terror that took the U.S. deep into Afghanistan in a military intervention that was supported, but not controlled, by the international community. After quickly dispatching the Taliban, who were the highest authority in Afghanistan, and dismantling Al-Qaeda’s presence in Afghanistan, the U.S. was in a position to turn its attention to the potential threat of Iraq that had lingered since 1991.

By using its new war-footing to leverage dialogue with Iraq, the U.S. initially found international support for a renewed weapons inspection process that would establish the threat posed by Iraq to international peace and security. Weapons inspections, however, were found to be largely outside the influence of the U.S. and, resorting to diplomatic options that allowed for the U.S. to maintain control over strategic objectives, Bush leaned toward military intervention as it was stressed that the weapons inspection process could not definitively confirm, nor deny, U.S. intelligence that suggested Iraq was a threat. The diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq show that Bush, in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, made the decision to resort to war with Iraq by utilising the diplomatic legitimacy that had been established by George H. W. Bush in 1991, and acting unilaterally when multilateral options did not favour the U.S.

**The New World Order in Practice**

After one hundred days of combat, Operation Desert Storm, which had made extensive use of airstrikes and a ground offensive, was declared a success. The international coalition led by the U.S. had achieved the United Nations Security Council’s objective of forcing a complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Faced with the decision to pursue the retreating Iraqi forces or to conclude the military intervention, George H. W. Bush chose the latter. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and Bush later rationalised the decision by claiming that it set a precedent for the benevolence of U.S. superpower post-Cold War. They wrote that “Our prompt withdrawal helped cement our position with our Arab allies, who now trusted us far more than they ever had. We had come to their assistance in their time of need, asked nothing for ourselves, and left again when the job was done.” Although the decision not to pursue the retreating Iraqi forces and confront Saddam Hussein in Baghdad would later receive criticism, Bush’s decision was supported. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney

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concluded in a press conference not long after the end of Desert Storm that the decision to fall back was the correct one, explaining that “If you’re going to go in and try to topple Saddam Hussein, you have to go into Baghdad. Once you’ve got Baghdad, it’s not clear what you do with it. It’s not clear what kind of government you would put in place of the one that’s currently there.”606 However, the conclusion of Desert Storm left the threat of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction unchecked. In order to verify that Iraq no longer remained a danger to any states in the Persian Gulf, the United Nations Security Council agreed to an ongoing monitoring and verification programme that inventoried and destroyed Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and its weapons manufacturing capabilities. To ensure Iraq complied with the United Nations Security Council demands for complete disarmament, sanctions that had been imposed on Iraq for the annexation of Kuwait were allowed to continue and were conditional, depending on Iraq’s disarmament status. The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was created under the executive chairmanship of Swedish Ambassador, Rolf Ekeus, to oversee the disarmament process and report to the Security Council regarding Iraq’s compliance. UNSCOM worked alongside the only other weapons verification mechanism in the United Nations - the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Through UNSCOM and the IAEA, the United Nations Security Council maintained authority over Iraq, especially with the unprecedented range of UNSCOM’s new powers that allowed inspectors to “designate for inspection any site, facility, activity, material or other item in Iraq.” These inspections, according to the Security Council, “would be conducted unannounced and at short notice,”607 and included overhead surveillance so that inspectors could more aggressively search for weapons. In return, Iraq was expected to support all UNSCOM and IAEA efforts unconditionally.608

607 Plan for future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq’s compliance with relevant parts of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) paragraph 17.
608 Ibid. paragraph 18.
With their new authority, UNSCOM weapons inspectors dismantled and destroyed more chemical and biological weapons, and manufacturing facilities, than the ground offensive and airstrikes throughout operation Desert Storm. Judged by their initial reports, UNSCOM was making headway toward verifying Iraq as completely disarmed. Despite these successes, there were concerns that the weapons inspectors were becoming an enforcement arm of the United Nations Security Council. Mohammed el-Baradei, legal head of the IAEA, recalled that while travelling from one location to another, and glancing around at the bus full of predominantly American specialists, he was struck by the attitude of those who were inspectors, noting that “they were highly qualified technically, but they had no clue about how to conduct international inspections or, for that matter, about the nuances of how to behave in different cultures. From their brash conversation, it was clear they believed that, having come to a defeated country, they had free rein to behave as they pleased.”

The difference in UNSCOM and IAEA inspection methods was also noticed by Hans Blix, who was head of the IAEA. Agreeing with el-Baradei, Blix added that in some cases inspections were more like intelligence gathering operations. In one case, David Kay, an American inspector, uncovered a cache of documents that concerned Iraq’s nuclear weapons programme. After a highly charged standoff in a car park that lasted several hours, where Kay refused to hand over the documents to Iraqi authorities and the Iraqi authorities refused to allow Kay to leave with the documents, the matter was resolved. The confrontational, and reckless, nature of Kay’s approach, which was a hallmark of the methods employed by UNSCOM, meant that Blix held reservations over the free-for-all information gathering that was being encouraged. After analysing the documents, Blix concluded that they had some use, but the process of finding the documents was flawed. First, to find the documents, you first had to know where to look. And, second, “the documents did not head to any weapons stores or, for that matter, to any weapons at all.”

In an effort to create a more efficient

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inspection process, UNSCOM and the IAEA turned toward intelligence agencies as a source of information that might aid weapons inspectors. Although there were benefits with intelligence agencies sharing what they knew about Iraq’s weapons programmes, Blix noted that “Gradually, ‘sharing’ came to mean that the intelligence partners ‘shared’ all the UNSCOM information they wanted, while information they obtained through piggybacking might not have been ‘shared’ with UNSCOM.” As the intelligence agencies became more entwined with weapons inspections, and progress on verifying Iraq as completely disarmed stagnated, it was only a matter of time before Iraq became frustrated by the lack of progress. After all, the sanctions that had been imposed since 1991 were still in full effect.

By 1998, after seven long years of unrelenting sanctions and continuous inspections, there still remained unanswered questions and doubts over the status of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, despite Iraqi objections. In August, Richard Butler, who had replaced Rolf Ekeus as chairman of UNSCOM in 1997, met with Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, to devise a work schedule that satisfactorily addressed the remaining disarmament questions. According to Butler, there was a lack of documentation that verified the unilateral destruction of missile production facilities, the status of chemical munitions, and the movement of prohibited equipment in Iraq. These concerns were in addition to the unresolved status of missing mustard gas shells. However, it was in regards to biological weapons capabilities that Butler was adamant Iraq was refusing to cooperate with UNSCOM, explaining that “The experts recommended that no further verification and/or assessment of Iraq’s biological declaration of full, final and complete disclosure be conducted until Iraq commits itself to provide a new and substantive information.” According to these experts, “any other approach would be a waste of time.” This prompted Aziz to condemn UNSCOM for the refusal to verify that Iraq was disarmed, and subsequently lifting sanctions. According to Aziz, there were only two remaining questions from the weapons inspections. They were “whether Iraq

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611 Ibid. 37.
612 Report from the executive chairman of the special commission, s/1998/719, Annex
613 Ibid. paragraph 27.
retained any weapons of mass destruction, including long-range missiles; and whether Iraq
capabilities for their production. Aziz’s simplification of the remaining weapons
inspections objections did not garner support from Butler.

The answer to both of Aziz’s questions was an emphatic, no. According to Iraq, UNSCOM
had deliberately emphasised minor issues with documentation in order to justify the United
Nations Security Council continuing sanctions on Iraq. But, Butler argued that he was “not
permitted to make disarmament by declaration,” and that without credible evidence provided
by Iraq “members of the council would challenge his claim that Iraq had no more proscribed
weapons or capabilities.” The purpose of the meeting, stressed Butler, was to implement a
work schedule that would lead to the suspension of sanctions providing Iraq cooperated with
UNSCOM. Aziz dismissed the plan out of hand, stating simply that “There are no more
proscribed weapons and materials in Iraq.” According to Aziz, if UNSCOM could not report to
the Security Council that Iraq was disarmed now there was no guarantee that UNSCOM
would make that report in the future. Therefore, went on Aziz, Iraq would refuse to cooperate
with inspections, referring to the proposed work schedule as “useless.” As a result of
Iraq’s refusal to cooperate with weapons inspectors, in December the U.S. advised
UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors to leave Iraq immediately and proceeded to conduct the
airstrike campaign Operation Desert Fox. The operation was a punishment, dealt out by the
U.S., for Iraq breaching the Security Council resolutions demanding unconditional
cooperation with weapons inspectors. However, the airstrikes only prompted Tariq Aziz to
officially announce, on December 19, that Iraq would not comply with UNSCOM’s mission in
Iraq any further, eliminating weapons inspections in Iraq. In response, President Bill

\[614\] Ibid. paragraph 34.
\[615\] Ibid. paragraph 54.
\[616\] Ibid. paragraph 60.
\[617\] Blix, Disarming Iraq, 35.
Clinton announced that U.S. policy was no longer to contain Iraq, but to replace Saddam Hussein’s regime.  

In January 1999, the United Nations Security Council began an inquiry into the situation in Iraq in order to review all the evidence that had been gathered by UNSCOM and the IAEA over the weapons inspection period. The inquiry comprised of three panels that evaluated the humanitarian impact of the sanctions regime that was determined by the verified disarmament of Iraq’s weapons programmes and addressed the concerns that were aired in the meeting between Butler and Aziz in 1998. Brazil’s Ambassador Celso Amorim headed the panel that reviewed UNSCOM and IAEA conclusions. According to the IAEA, inspections had determined that Iraq’s nuclear weapons programme “had been very well funded and was aimed at the development and production of a small arsenal of nuclear weapons, but there was no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme’s objective.” The IAEA concluded, based upon the information that had been collected and presented to the United Nations Security Council up until weapons inspectors withdrew from Iraq in 1998, that “there is no indication that Iraq possess nuclear weapons or any meaningful amounts of weaponizable nuclear material or that Iraq has retained any practical capability (facilities or hardware) for the production of such material.” Although there were remaining concerns over a lack of documentation that covered specific technical aspects of the Iraqi nuclear programme, the Amorim report concluded that Iraq was disarmed of nuclear weapons capability, and that the IAEA was in a position to move to an ongoing monitoring programme. However, UNSCOM findings had been more problematic. Although UNSCOM inspectors had disarmed Iraq of its verified ballistic weapons capabilities, concerns remained over the

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620 Ibid.
status of over fifty warheads and seven missiles that had been unilaterally destroyed without
documentation. Similar concerns were expressed over the status of chemical weapons. Over
the course of inspections, UNSCOM inspectors had verified and destroyed a significant
amount of munitions and production capacity. However, there were munitions that the Iraqi’s
unilaterally destroyed that lacked documentation. UNSCOM were also unable to find
evidence that explained the discrepancies in financing for chemical weapons during the
1980s, the status of five hundred and fifty artillery shells that had gone missing during the
Gulf War in 1991, and the military panning for Iraq’s VX programme. However, despite the
issues surrounding Iraq’s chemical weapons programme, the Amorim report concluded that
UNSCOM had destroyed and rendered inoperable all declared biological weapons facilities
in Iraq. After reviewing all the available information presented by UNSCOM and the IAEA,
the Amorim report concluded that “although important elements still have to be resolved, the
bulk of Iraq’s proscribed weapons programmes has been eliminated.”621 The Amorim report
did not, however, vouch for the complete disarmament of Iraq.

Ambassador Amorim’s evaluation was that weapons inspections in Iraq had reached a “point
of impasse,” where “further investigation of these issues under the current
procedures…might correspond to an apparent diminishing return in recent years.”622 The
weapons inspection programme was based on the belief that Iraq could be disarmed beyond
any reasonable doubt, something both the IAEA and UNSCOM believed was not possible,
and therefore the programme had to shift priority to an ongoing monitoring and verification
programme that would “attempt to determine that proscribed activities are not being carried
out.”623 In order to do this, the core mission for UNSCOM was reinterpreted, and
Ambassador Amorim concluded that “such a reinforced OMV system, which should include
intrusive inspections and investigation of relevant elements of past activities, is viable.”624

621 Ibid. paragraph 25.
622 Ibid.
623 Ibid. paragraph 32.
624 Ibid. paragraph 61.
Hans Blix, watching the report’s findings closely, approved of the revised UNSCOM mission. Blix was satisfied that the nature of UNSCOM inspections had been found ineffective, and that Ambassador Amorim’s report had insisted that “inspection should be effective and could be highly intrusive, but should avoid being unnecessarily confrontational.” For Blix, then, the Amorim report reinforced United Nations authority over the weapons inspection process. However, there still remained questions over the status of sanctions that had been devised around the objective of verified, and complete, Iraqi disarmament. The U.S., ceding authority over weapons inspections to the United Nations Security Council, refused to support relinquishing sanctions, arguing that Iraq was still in breach of its Security Council requirements. In an effort to compromise with the members of the United Nations Security Council, and regain some consensus on Iraq, the U.S. spent the end of 1999 negotiating a new sanctions resolution. The U.S. agreed to loosen economic sanctions, if Iraq made significant progress on a number of outstanding disarmament tasks that would be determined by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), the weapons inspection commission that had replaced UNSCOM and contained the recommendations of the Amorim report. Iraq refused to readmit weapons inspectors under the new conditions, instead, choosing to remain isolated from the international community.

The Evolving United Nations Security Council Consensus

In January 2000, Hans Blix was nominated for the chairmanship of UNMOVIC. Accepting the appointment, Blix reflected on the reasons for leaving retirement to take on another posting in the United Nations. Blix explained that since his tenure as head of the IAEA, and throughout UNSCOM inspections, he believed that the confrontational nature of the

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625 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 40.
626 Pollack, The Threatening Storm, 100.
inspections were counterproductive, and served only to antagonize Iraq. Blix recalled, “I had heard it many times from inspectors that they thought the IAEA often got more information through a more restrained, professional UN Style.”\(^627\) Upon being asked to head UNMOVIC, Blix found it difficult to resist applying this preferred style of inspections to UNMOVIC. Alongside Mohamed el-Baradei, who had replaced Hans Blix as head of the IAEA in 1997, the new weapons inspections regime showed a re-evaluated approach to the questions that had emerged from Ambassador Amorim’s report. By March 24, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon reported to the Security Council that there was a humanitarian crisis in Iraq as a result of the ongoing sanctions, and the United Nations Security Council had to find a solution. Ban Ki-Moon reminded the Security Council that “the United Nations has always been on the side of the vulnerable and the weak and has always sought to relieve suffering. Yet here we are accused of causing suffering to an entire population.”\(^628\) Ban Ki-Moon’s report was the beginning of a change in the Security Council’s consensus over Iraq.

Ban Ki-Moon’s report to the Security Council served as cover for the permanent members of the Security Council to express their dissatisfaction with the current sanctions imposed on Iraq. Russia’s Ambassador Sergey Lavrov pointed to a double standard in the application of sanctions and complained that states who were attempting to conduct legitimate business with Iraq had found their efforts blocked by other Security Council members for “artificial pretexts.” According to Ambassador Lavrov, some business contracts were placed on hold, while “requests for deliveries of similar goods from other countries are endorsed without any problem.”\(^629\) If the administration of sanctions was so ineffective, went the reasoning, then it was assumed that they would not be successfully implemented. Furthermore, the unilaterally imposed no-fly zones that were enforced by the U.S. and United Kingdom were a source of antagonism for Iraq. Ambassador Lavrov explained that it was “inadmissible to call upon Iraq

\(^{627}\) Blix, Disarming Iraq, 44.


\(^{629}\) Ibid. 6.
to cooperate while at the same [time] continuing to bomb Iraqi territory.”

France’s Ambassador Jean-David Levitte agreed with the Russian appraisal of the situation in Iraq. The inconsistency of the Security Council application of Iraqi sanctions was unacceptable, and they could no longer ignore the developing humanitarian crisis. Ambassador Levitte explained that as a result of sanctions “in the future, the effectiveness and consequences of broad, indiscriminate sanctions that hurt civilian populations exclusively and whose human cost clearly exceeds any political benefits that the Council could expect of them.”

United States Ambassador James Cunningham could not believe that the Security Council was developing a consensus that absolved Iraq of its past indiscretions. Defending the Security Council’s stance in regards to Iraqi sanctions, Ambassador Cunningham recited a list of resolutions that Iraq had failed to implement, and concluded that “Iraq remains a threat.”

Ambassador Cunningham, appealing to Security Council members, explained that so long as Saddam Hussein retained leadership in Iraq there would be no cooperation with the Security Council, and that “Where there has been deprivation in Iraq, the Iraqi regime has been responsible.” Although the Security Council was seen to be moving away from the consensus that sanctions deserved to be enforced because of Iraq’s defiance, Cunningham’s response illustrated the shift in U.S. perceptions of the problems faced in Iraq. The emphasis placed on Saddam Hussein reflected the shift, seen under Clinton, toward regarding the dictator, rather than the state, as the source of instability in the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. position remained unchanged in Security Council. Ambassador Cunningham refused to back down from the commitment to contain the threat posed by Iraq by enforcing no-fly zones, and dismissed the administrative difficulties some states had raised concerning the application of sanctions. According to Cunningham, it was Iraq that had to change its

630 Ibid. 6.
631 Ibid. 16 – 17.
632 Ibid. 7.
633 Ibid. 8.
relationship with the United Nations Security Council, not the other way around. Cunningham insisted that the oil-for-food programme, a sanctions compromise that the U.S. had agreed to when UNMOVIC was created, was a necessary concession. Cunningham went to great lengths to emphasise that it was the Iraqi government that was failing the Iraqi people, not the international community, explaining that “The United Nations works for the Iraqi people. The Government [of Iraq] does not. Non-governmental organisations work for the Iraqi people. The Government [of Iraq] does not.”634 Although Ambassador Cunningham made a cursory effort to stress the importance of the United Nations Security Council consensus against Iraq, the ambassador lacked direct support from the Clinton administration. Kenneth Pollack, a CIA analyst specialising in the Middle East, explained that by the end of the Clinton Administration attention had turned away from the situation in Iraq. Pollack observed that “By the summer of 2000…The Vice President was campaigning full-time, the president was investing ever more of his time in trying to secure a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement before he left office, and the rest of the government was just trying to prevent its position on Iraq from deteriorating further.”635 Just as the weapons inspections had suffered from fatigue, so too had U.S. attention toward Iraq.

In June, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to continue the oil-for-food programme that was the backbone of emergency humanitarian aid to Iraq. However, the continuation of the programme only showed the unwillingness of the permanent members to explore new possibilities for improving the situation in Iraq. China’s Ambassador Wang Yingfan was not restrained in expressing China’s disappointment with the Security Council, arguing that they were not “entirely satisfied with the resolution that the Council had just adopted…because it does not fully reflect an important element favoured by most States members of the Council.”636 Focused on the humanitarian impact of the sanctions,

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634 Ibid. 10.
Ambassador Yingfan stated, “The humanitarian suffering of Iraqi civilians is, principally, a consequence of the 10 years of sanctions against Iraq” and, therefore, the Security Council was responsible for the welfare of the Iraqi people. Despite China’s efforts to refocus the Security Council on the humanitarian impact of the sanctions, the oil-for-food programme was again reviewed in December and extended into the New Year, the only alteration attributed to financial provisions that would streamline funds into the reconstruction of Iraq’s oil industry. Even this minor alteration was enough to prompt Ambassador Cunningham to warn the Security Council against loosening the economic constraints on Iraq, as it was still clear that even “during the negotiation of this new phase of the programme we have seen numerous Iraqi attempts to avoid, rather than accept, obligations to the international community.” However, it was also clear that for as long as the U.S. remained focused on the presidential election, the administration was unwilling to compromise or consider any new approaches to Iraq, and sanctions remained in a suspended state. Ambassador Sergey Lavrov was adamant, in response to Cunningham’s indictment of the Iraqi regime, that “a fundamental resolution of the problem of the humanitarian crisis will be impossible as long as sanctions are maintained.” With the election of U.S. president George W. Bush, there was, at least, an opportunity to pursue an alternate solution.

Bush was inaugurated as the 42nd President of the United States in January 2001. Despite the controversial election results that were, in the end, determined by a Supreme Court decision, Bush ended the Democrat occupation of the White House. This also meant the appointment of a new selection of secretaries, advisers, and policymakers. Kenneth Pollack, in a final memo briefing the incoming administration on the status of Iraq, warned that containment had eroded, and that there were two choices that had to be made – “to adopt an aggressive policy of regime change to try to get rid of Saddam quickly or undertake a

637 Ibid. 3.
639 Ibid. 8.
major revamping of the sanctions to try and choke off the smuggling and prevent Saddam from reconstituting his military, especially his hidden WMD programs.” Pollack complained that the second option was more difficult because of the lack of consensus in the United Nations Security Council and the unwillingness of other states to match U.S. intentions to confront Iraq. However, among the incoming policymakers, revamping sanctions appeared far more plausible, in the immediate future, than regime change. U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair recalled, in his first meeting with Bush in February 2001, that there was no sense of urgency regarding Iraq. Blair explained that “George was set on building a strong right-wing power base in the US, capable of sustaining him through two terms, and was focused especially on education and tax reform.” Any concerns regarding Iraq involved the possibility of new sanctions. Richard Haass, who was now Director of Policy and Planning at the State Department, forwarded a plan to impose “smart” sanctions on Iraq that was based on research he had conducted with Meghan O’Sullivan at the Brookings Institution. The plan was simple. Smart sanctions allowed a larger range of non-military goods to be imported by Iraq, in exchange for an increased revenue stream from Iraqi exports going into accounts controlled by the United Nations instead of Iraq. The plan was embraced by Secretary Powell, and despite scepticism from the rest of the administration, Bush signed off the initiative. Haass noted that the administration understood from the beginning that Iraq was an important foreign policy concern. However, Haass explained that what the administration was focused on “when it came to Iraq was…recasting the sanctions regime. There was a directive to look at existing military plans, but this lacked any real intensity at the time. It was more a dusting off of what was there rather than anything new.” Bush was not inaugurated with a plan to oust Saddam Hussein. Indeed, Bush’s priorities rested in cutting government expenditure. This meant the Pentagon did not receive the increased funding that was

640 Pollack, The Threatening Storm, 103.
641 Blair, A Journey, 392-3.
643 Ibid. 175.
required for a new generation of weaponry, and the administration did not present any urgency in matters of defense. Any advanced plan to confront Iraq militarily, included.\textsuperscript{644}

The smart sanctions were put to the test at a United Nations Security Council session in June. Despite having received support from the U.K. for the revised sanctions, there remained significant opposition from the remaining members of the Security Council. Russia was particularly critical of the proposed changes, and Ambassador Lavrov argued that “key elements of the United Kingdom draft appear to lead not to easing the very harsh economic situation of Iraq, but rather to tightening the sanctions.”\textsuperscript{645} Lavrov explained that by further complicating the list of items that were under sanction, the Security Council was inhibiting, to a greater degree, legitimate trade with Iraq. China agreed with Lavrov’s assessment, and Ambassador Yingfin argued that “Foreign companies should be allowed to invest in Iraq, and countries should be allowed to freely sign service contracts with Iraq.”\textsuperscript{646} China and Russia agreed that the Security Council was exacerbating and prolonging the humanitarian crisis in Iraq by not relinquishing sanctions. This time U.K. Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock argued against opposition in the Security Council, stressing that “it is our responsibility in the Council to prevent Iraq from posing a threat to its region and, as part of this, to ensure that Iraq is fully and verifiably disarmed of its weapons of mass destruction.”\textsuperscript{647} Implementing smart sanctions was a step towards streamlining sanctions so that Iraq could not re-arm, and the impact of sanctions on the people of Iraq was negated. Greenstock reminded the Security Council that “we are all aware that Iraq continues to export oil outside the United Nations system to build up illegal revenue with which it can purchase weapons and other proscribed items.”\textsuperscript{648} Although Greenstock was reserved in his arguments against Chinese and Russian opposition, U.S. Ambassador James Cunningham was not. Cunningham stated simply that

\textsuperscript{644} James Mann, \textit{Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet} (Viking, 2004), 290.


\textsuperscript{646} Ibid. 11.

\textsuperscript{647} Ibid. 4.

\textsuperscript{648} Ibid. 6.
smart sanctions were designed to prevent Iraq from acquiring the materials it needed to re-arm. At some point in the future the Security Council might revise those limitations, but only “once there is confidence that they would not be used to rebuild Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction or improve its military capabilities.”\textsuperscript{649} The U.S. remained unconvinced that Iraq was disarmed, and remained committed to imposing sanctions on Iraq until it was. France, however, attempted to find a middle ground between the permanent members. Ambassador Levitte reminded China and Russia that weapon inspectors had been absent from Iraq for two and a half years. However, Levitte argued that “recovery requires the return of normal economic conditions.”\textsuperscript{650} As a result of the inconclusive debate between the permanent members, the introduction of smart sanctions was delayed. Bush remained confronted by the lingering problem of Iraq. According to Richard Haass, this was not a bad outcome. Reflecting on policy initiatives to confront Iraq, including forceful regime change, Haass concluded that “the current and projected situation was not intolerable. Saddam Hussein was a nuisance, not a mortal threat. Trying to oust him, however desirable, did not need to become such a preoccupation that it would come to dominate the administration’s foreign policy absent a major new provocation. The United States had more important goals to promote around both the region and the world that would be put in jeopardy were it to get bogged down in Iraq.”\textsuperscript{651} The failure of the U.S. to pressure the United Nations Security Council into embracing revised sanctions only diminished the authority the Security Council wielded over Iraq.

The debate over Iraqi sanctions, however, had been opened to non-members of the Security Council, and the majority consensus of the non-Security Council members was in favour of reducing the severity of sanctions imposed on Iraq in order to alleviate a humanitarian crisis. This support encouraged Iraq’s Ambassador al-Qaysi, who blamed the U.S. for the continuing sanctions. Ambassador al-Qaysi complained that Iraq had been antagonised by

\textsuperscript{649} Ibid. 9.
\textsuperscript{650} Ibid. 7.
\textsuperscript{651} Haass, \textit{War of Necessity, War of Choice}, 182.
U.S. airstrikes in early February that destroyed a number of air-defense sites in Iraq.\footnote{Ibid. 173.} According to al-Qaysi, Iraq was being unfairly and severely punished. Pointing to the consensus of the Security Council that sided with abandoning sanctions, Ambassador al-Qaysi explained that “the faltering of the sanctions regime represents in reality a concrete reflection of the lack of conviction of the majority of the international community.”\footnote{United Nations Security Council, The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait, Document Number S/PV.4336 (Resumption 1), 28 June, 2001, 25.} Smart sanctions that had been proposed by the U.S. and U.K. were accused of being a front for Western companies to receive preferential treatment. Ambassador al-Qaysi asked “Do we have any guarantee that those companies are not going to be fat cats of Western origin and be the only ones allowed to buy Iraqi oil?”\footnote{Ibid. 27.} However, this was beside the point. Ambassador al-Qaysi noted that the Amorim report had concluded that Iraq was disarmed, and warned the U.S. and U.K. that they could not accuse Iraq of reinstating weapons of mass destruction programs without evidence. Secretary General Kofi Annan had agreed with Iraq on this point, stating in an earlier report on the situation in Iraq that it was imperative to “put the burden of proof on any side that alleges that Iraq still has weapons of mass destruction.”\footnote{Ibid. 28.} The result of the open debate within the Security Council was a resounding rejection of the U.S. proposed smart sanctions, and the implemented oil-for-food program continued without change. Ambassador Cunningham rued that the Security Council had missed an opportunity to force change in Iraq, declaring that smart sanctions would “have been adopted today save for the threat of a veto.”\footnote{United Nations Security Council, The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait, Document Number S/PV.4344, 3 July, 2001, 3.} Although disappointed at the lack of support in the Security Council, Ambassador Cunningham promised that “We have made considerable progress and have come too close to agreement to concede the field to
Baghdad.”\textsuperscript{657} It would take a greater effort from Washington to force change in the Security Council, let alone Iraq.

\textbf{A 21st Century Threat}

Surveying the international standing of the U.S. at the turn of the twenty-first century, diplomatic historian Andrew Bacevich observed that “For members of the young Bush administration charged with responsibility for American statecraft, the future looked rosy indeed.”\textsuperscript{658} However, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, irrevocably changed Bush’s diplomatic stance. The death of over three thousand American civilians stunned not only the U.S., but reverberated throughout the international community. At the behest of the U.K., the Security Council convened a session on September 12 in order to condemn the terrorist attacks. Ambassador Greenstock, reflecting on the attacks, explained that “we all have to understand that this is a global issue, an attack on the whole of modern civilization and an affront to the human spirit. We must all respond globally and show the strength of spirit.”\textsuperscript{659} The attacks had spurred a new solidarity between the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as Ambassador Lavrov added that the terrorist attacks reminded every nation of the “the timeliness of the task of joining the efforts of the entire international community in combating terror, this plague of the twenty first century.”\textsuperscript{660} Ambassador Levitte, summarising the collective thoughts of the United Nations Security Council, reminded the U.S. that “We stand with the United States in deciding upon any action to combat those who resort to terrorism, those who aid them and those who protect

\textsuperscript{657} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{660} Ibid. 5.
The offer to extend the hand of the United Nations Security Council toward fighting those involved in terrorism supported the new U.S. war footing. Ambassador Cunningham, proud of the support from the United Nations Security Council, stated that "we look to all those who stand for peace, justice and security in the world to stand together with the United States to win the war against terrorism. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them. We will bring those responsible to account." The U.K., in leading condolences from the Security Council to the U.S., illustrated the close relationship between the two states, a fact that Blair stressed.

In the wake of the attacks, al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was agreed on by U.S. intelligence as the likely organiser of the terrorist attacks, and was therefore the target of a U.S. military response. As one of al-Qaeda’s main training facilities was located in Afghanistan, and the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan refused to cooperate with the U.S. to hand over Osama Bin Laden and destroy the training facility, the U.S. set about achieving those two objectives itself. But, as expressed by Phillip Zelikow, the administration “had no plan whatever for ground operations in Afghanistan – none. The plans against Afghanistan, bearing the blustery codename Infinite Resolve, were little different than when the Clinton White House had looked them over after the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole. Central Command (CENTCOM) commander Tommy Franks regarded them as hardly deserving the title ‘plan.’” The administration fell back onto a CIA plan to utilise tribal leaders in a loosely based Northern Alliance to agitate the Taliban government, and the U.S. pushed forward with its objectives to capture Osama Bin Laden, destroy al-Qaeda’s base in Afghanistan, and

661 Ibid. 7.
662 Ibid. 7-8.
663 A running theme in Blair’s memoirs is the U.K. standing ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ with the United States. The September 11 attacks, according to Blair, were not just an attack on the U.S., but on the U.K as well. As a consequence of the September 11 attacks, Blair viewed Iraq with a different filer, stressing that “I believed then, as I do now, that the US could not afford to lose this battle, that our job as an ally who faced a common threat should be to be with them in our hour of need.” Blair, A Journey, 401.
expel the Taliban government. In November, the Taliban government dissolved and the U.S. military commitment was deemed a success. The lack of multilateral assistance also reinforced the success of U.S. unilateral action. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld had rebuffed an unprecedented offer from NATO for military assistance, determining such a large coalition as tactically prohibitive, and was relishing U.S. success.\textsuperscript{665} By March 2002, the U.S. began a larger operation against the remaining al-Qaeda members in Afghanistan that lead to anti-Taliban tribal leaders consolidating their control of Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan was considered an overall victory when diplomats from several nations negotiated for the formation of a new Afghanistan government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, a well-educated tribal leader who was the pick of the western governments.

Riding a wave of popularity into 2002 as a decisive war-time president, Bush utilised his State of the Union address to lay the groundwork for the next step in what was regarded as a global war on terror. Referring to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an “axis of evil” that threatened the peace and security of the world, Bush made it clear that the next step was to confront those threats. According to Zelikow, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and speechwriter Michael Gerson believed the diplomatic emphasis of the State of the Union would focus on the “nonnegotiable demands of human dignity,” in an effort to describe a world “beyond the war on terror.” However, it was clear that Iraq had returned as a concern for the administration.\textsuperscript{666} The leaked military plan from the Department of Defense in February 2002 reinforced the assumption that Bush was supporting a plan to confront Saddam Hussein. In briefings, Bush had “overwhelmingly emphasized doable operations to defeat Iraqi forces and topple Saddam.”\textsuperscript{667} The reconfiguration of strategies to confront Saddam Hussein was reinforced by the success of the operations that had toppled Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. By June, a shift had been made in Bush’s stance on Iraq. In a graduation speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Bush suggested

\textsuperscript{667} Ibid. 112.
that “deterrence could not be relied upon in an age in which rogue states and terrorist groups could acquire weapons of mass destruction,” a conclusion that was contrary to the advice of Richard Haass and the State Department. Haass noted that the administration was suffering from diverging advice over plans to confront Saddam Hussein, and that he was concerned when “those who worked with me on the Policy Planning Staff began to come back from meetings around the government and report that those of their counterparts known for advocating going to war with Iraq appeared too cocky for comfort.” With the military success in Afghanistan, the Defense Department had earned a reputation for results, unlike the State Department’s efforts to confront Saddam Hussein, and the increased planning within the Pentagon for war with Iraq intensified the public scrutiny. The cycle became self-fulfilling. As the media reported that war was being planned, the administration made sure that there were plans for war, lest they be caught unprepared. By August 2002, Blair remarked that “at times we would not be sure whether we were driving the agenda or being driven by it.” Bush waited to clarify the U.S. position at the United Nations in September.

On September 12, 2002, Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly for the first time. Secretary-General Kofi Annan set the agenda by listing threats to international peace and security one year on from the terrorist attacks in the U.S. First, Annan gave priority to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Second, he referred to Iraq’s continued defiance of Security Council resolutions and the refusal to readmit inspectors. Annan considered the renewal of weapons inspections as an “indispensable first step towards assuring the world that all Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction have indeed been eliminated.” Third, he stressed the commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan was maintained in the wake of major military operations. And, fourth, was reconciling differences between India and Pakistan, both of

668 Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 213.
669 Ibid.
670 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, 335-6.
671 Blair, A Journey, 404.
whom had recently acquired nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{672} Bush’s address, however, ignored to a great extent Annan’s list and reinforced the perception that the U.S. had focused on Iraq. Bush stated that the “greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies enabling them to kill on a massive scale.”\textsuperscript{673} According to Bush, Iraq was an outlaw state that continued “to shelter and support terrorist organizations that direct violence against Iraq, Israel, and Western Governments.”\textsuperscript{674} By accusing Iraq of supporting terrorism, Bush had stretched the parameters of the global war on terror to legitimate action against Iraq. In support of the claim that Iraq posed an imminent threat to international peace and security, Bush explained that intelligence suggested Iraq was in the process of rebuilding its weapons of mass destruction capabilities, a claim that remained unverified because of the lack of weapons inspectors in Iraq. Bush was convinced that “Should Iraq acquire fissile material, it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year.”\textsuperscript{675} The central purpose of Bush’s address was to ignite support for a United Nations sanctioned mission to rectify the situation in Iraq, even suggesting that the United Nations help “build a Government that represents all Iraqis.”\textsuperscript{676} However, there remained no doubts that the appeal to the United Nations for assistance was a take it or leave it proposition. Finishing his address, Bush promised that “the Security Council resolutions will be enforced, and the just demands of peace and security will be met, or action will be unavoidable, and a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.”\textsuperscript{677} Indeed, Blair had noticed the shift in the U.S. attitude toward Iraq immediately after September 11. Blair recalled:

Saddam had been an unwelcome reminder of battles past, a foe that we had beaten but left in place, to the disgruntlement of many. But he had not been perceived as a threat.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid.
\item Ibid. 7.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid. 8.
\item Ibid. 9.
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Now it was not so much that the direct threat increased, but he became bound up in the US belief that so shocking had been the attack, so serious had been its implications, that the world had to be remade. Countries whose governments were once disliked but tolerated became, overnight, potential enemies, to be confronted, made to change attitude, or made to change government.\textsuperscript{678}

Having disregarded Annan's list of prominent threats to international peace and security, Bush left no doubt that there was a strategic shift in the global war on terror, and that it would focus on Iraq.\textsuperscript{679}

Bush's stance was confirmed in the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) published on September 17, 2002, which emphasised the unilateralism of the U.S. The NSS was clear about what the U.S. was prepared to do to confront the twenty-first century threat of terrorism. The NSS stressed that “the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today’s threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first.”\textsuperscript{680} This left the U.S. with the option of “pre-emptive actions” to counter perceived threats to its national security. The NSS added that “to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively.”\textsuperscript{681}

\textsuperscript{678} Blair, A Journey, 396.
\textsuperscript{679} Alexander Thompson, in \textit{Channels of Power}, observes that U.S. persistence in the Security Council for a resolution that confronted Iraq was not because Bush believed that United Nations approval was necessary for a successful military operation. According to Thompson, United Nations approval “would demonstrate to the international community that the United States was willing to be constrained and to accommodate the interests of others. This would diminish the threat posed by a U.S. intervention in the region to the interests of various politically important governments. Second, and most important, the Bush administration was concerned with the reactions of domestic publics abroad...Security Council approval would signal to their publics that the coercive policy being pursued was designed to provide broad international benefits – beyond the narrow interests of the United States.” Alexander Thompson, \textit{Channels of Power: The UN Security Council and U.S. Statecraft in Iraq} (Cornell University Press, 2009), 161-62.
\textsuperscript{681} Ibid.
embodied the vision of the world after September 11 that had been encouraged by Condoleezza Rice, a vision that “the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attack were bookends for a transitional period in world history.” Zelikow noted that Rice added “before the clay is dry again, America and our friends and our allies must move decisively.”\(^{682}\) However, even before the publication of the National Security Strategy, and Bush’s United Nations General Assembly address, it was already perceived through diplomatic channels that the U.S. was moving into militant posture. In July, Sir Richard Dearlove, the head of Britain’s Foreign Intelligence Service (MI6), had met with senior U.S. officials in Washington. In a memo from Downing Street on July 23, 2002, Dearlove recorded “a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD.”\(^{683}\) It was already clear to Iraq after Bush’s address to the United Nations that the U.S. was prepared to resort to force against Iraq and, pre-empting the publication of the NSS, Iraq readmitted weapons inspectors on September 16, 2002.

The United Nations Security Council spent October negotiating the conditions of the resumed weapons inspections in Iraq. In an effort to promote consensus, the Security Council session was an open debate. Secretary General Kofi Annan set the agenda by admitting, although the readmission of inspectors to Iraq was welcome, “Iraq has to comply…If Iraq fails to make use of this last chance, and if defiance continues, the Council will have to face its responsibilities.”\(^{684}\) However, Annan also warned the permanent members of the Security Council that “if you allow yourselves to be divided, the authority and credibility of the organization will undoubtedly suffer.”\(^{685}\) It was hoped that by opening the debate over two days, a broader consensus might emerge from the opportunity for states to articulate a position that was not normally heard in the Security Council. South African


\(^{683}\) Haass, War of Necessity, War of Choice, 215.


\(^{685}\) Ibid. 4.
Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo related the mission to disarm Iraq to the same process of disarmament in South Africa in the late 1990s, warning that the “pre-emptive response” position of the U.S. meant that the Security Council might taint the work of the weapons inspections. Kumalo warned that “it would be tragic if the Council were to prejudge the work of inspectors before they set foot in Iraq.” Kumalo reminded the permanent members that “The Security Council represents our collective security concerns and should ultimately be accountable to the entire United Nations.” However, Australia’s Ambassador John Dauth added his support to the hard-line stance taken by Bush. Dauth agreed with the U.S. that “Iraq today poses a clear danger to international security because it has sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction and has a well established record of using them against its neighbours, and, indeed, against its own people.” Australia remained convinced that Saddam Hussein maintained his ambitions to acquire weapons of mass destruction and that “in the aftermath of 11 September and, I say with great sadness, the events of 12 October in Bali, the international community must be scrupulous in addressing threats to international security, or face the disastrous consequences.” Australia’s support had additional strategic value as it emerged from an alignment of interests between the U.S. and Australia that was supported by the ANZUS treaty, and guaranteed by military support.

Hans Blix and Mohamed el-Baradei had also spent October in meetings with U.S. officials in order to flesh out a proposal for suitable objectives for weapons inspections. The

686 Ibid. 5.
687 Ibid.
688 Security Council, S/PV.4625 (Resumption 1), 9.
689 Ibid. 10.
690 Joseph Siracusa, “John Howard, Australia, and the Coalition of the Willing,” Yale Journal of International Affairs, Winter/Spring (2006). Siracusa notes that “the Bush administration views Australia as one of the United States’ most loyal allies. Howard, in turn, has cashed in by strengthening diplomatic ties between Canberra and Washington, particularly on trade and defense matters. The reinvigoration of the U.S.-Australia relationship can be ascribed to consensual strategic behaviour in response to a changing global security environment.” (p 48). Australia’s vocal support of the U.S. in the early stages of confronting Saddam Hussein was one part of the “consensual strategic behaviour” of Australia and the U.S.
expectations of inspections differed depending on whom Blix and el-Baradei met in the administration. Vice President Cheney was upfront about U.S. expectations of the weapons inspectors. Blix reflected that Cheney told both the inspectors that he “in talking about the world at large [always] took the security interests of the United States as his starting point.” However, Cheney warned that the inspections could not continue indefinitely, and that the U.S. was “ready to discredit inspections in favour of disarmament.” It was clear that the vice president was ready to recommend bypassing the Security Council if the weapons inspections did not produce results that favoured U.S. intelligence. Cheney’s attitude was different from Bush, who greeted Blix and el-Baradei warmly and said that the U.S. had full confidence in the weapons inspectors, promising that the U.S. would “throw its support behind us.” These bipolar attitudes were present in the final days of the open debate in the Security Council. Ambassador Greenstock stressed the importance of an open debate and welcomed the input from non-Security Council members. However, “The United Kingdom analysis, backed up by reliable intelligence, indicates that Iraq still possesses chemical and biological materials, has continued to produce them, has sought to weaponize them and has active military plans for the deployment of such weapons.” Quoting Prime Minister Tony Blair, Ambassador Greenstock agreed with the U.S. that “the policy of containment isn’t any longer working…we know from 11 September that it is sensible to deal with these problems before, not after.” United States Ambassador John Negroponte, who had replaced Ambassador John Cunningham, struck a harder line and dismissed the moderate appraisal of the Security Council, warning that the United Nations was at risk of becoming irrelevant. Ambassador Negroponte referred to legislation that had passed through the U.S. Congress that “expressed support for the Administration’s diplomatic efforts

691 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 86.
692 Ibid.
693 Ibid.
695 Ibid.
in the Security Council to ensure that ‘Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and non-compliance’ and authorized the use of United States armed forces should diplomatic efforts fail.\footnote{Ibid. 12.} Although Blix and el-Baradei had received the impression of some support for the weapons inspection process when they were in Washington, it was clear from the U.S. stance at the United Nations that that was not the case. Ambassador Negroponte added a quote from Bush declaring that “Either the Iraqi regime will give up its weapons of mass destruction, or, for the sake of peace, the United States will lead a global coalition to disarm that regime.”\footnote{Ibid.} Opposing the U.S. and U.K. were the remaining permanent members of the Security Council. Ambassador Levitte summarised the opinion of the remaining permanent members by stating that the “objective is the disarmament of Iraq. This implies the return of the inspectors and the resumption of monitoring on the ground.”\footnote{Ibid. 12-13.} Both the U.K. and U.S. were presumptuous in assuming that Iraq was a threat that required immediate military action, reminding the two states that “any kind of ‘automaticity’ in the use of force will profoundly divide us.”\footnote{Ibid. 13.} The Security Council was beginning to understand that the opportunity to restrain the U.S. had long since passed. For the U.K., however, Blair had decided to back the U.S. to the hilt. Blair recalled that “I was well aware that ultimately the US would take its own decision in its own interests. But I was also aware that in the new world taking shape around us, Britain and Europe were going to face a much more uncertain future without America…So when they had need of us, were we really going to refuse; or, even worse, hope they succeeded but could do it without us? I reflected and felt the weight of an alliance and its history, not oppressively but insistently, a call to duty, a call to act, a call to be at their side, not distant from it, when they felt imperilled.”\footnote{Blair, A Journey, 401.} Blair’s ‘call to duty’ ensured Bush was not alone in confronting Iraq.

696 Ibid. 12.
697 Ibid.
698 Ibid. 12-13.
699 Ibid. 13.
700 Blair, A Journey, 401.
The result of the open debate was the unanimous approval of resolution 1441 in November that introduced weapons inspectors back into Iraq with a renewed set of objectives for UNMOVIC and the IAEA. Although the intent of the resolution was to gauge the extent of Iraqi cooperation with weapons inspectors, Ambassador Negroponte was adamant that should Iraq breach any conditions of the resolution there would be no restraining “any Member State from acting to defend itself against the threat posed by Iraq or to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions and protect world peace and security.” 701 Ambassador Greenstock was more measured, reassuring the rest of the Security Council that “there is no ‘automaticity’ in this resolution. If there is a further Iraqi breach of its disarmament obligations, the matter will return to the Council for discussion as required by paragraph 12.” 702 This was an apparent attempt to moderate the U.S. posture. Although France and Russia voted in favour of the resolution, they reiterated that there was no condition under which any member state could act unilaterally. Ambassador Yangfin confirmed that “the text no longer includes automaticity for authorizing the use of force.” 703 Differing interpretations of the resolution were apparent from all members of the Security Council. Despite this, Blix noted that “the differences in interpretation faded into the background in the general delight that the Council had come together and had come out strong.” 704 Although there had been compromise, there was no doubt that the resolution was an important step in ending the stalemate with Iraq. However, it was a minor victory. There was no doubt that the resolution would not have been accepted by Iraq without the threat of armed intervention by the U.S. 705 By November 13, Iraq had accepted the conditions of resolution 1441.

702 Ibid. 5.
703 Ibid. 13.
704 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 89.
705 Ibid.
Inspecting Iraq

The question if Iraq constituted a terrorist threat was discussed at a ministerial level meeting of the United Nations Security Council on January 20, 2003. This meeting, influenced to a great extent by French opposition to an attack on Iraq, was later described as an ambush. Powell went into the meeting expecting a discussion concerning terrorism, and instead received a rebuff of U.S. efforts to confront Iraq.\textsuperscript{706} Germany’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Joschka Fischer explained that he was “greatly concerned that a military strike against the regime in Baghdad would involve considerable and unpredictable risks for the global fight against terrorism.”\textsuperscript{707} It was beyond doubt that the U.S. had convinced the United Nations Security Council that it was prepared to go to war with Iraq as part of the global war on terror, and the U.K. Secretary of State Jack Straw added that he supported the U.S. position, explaining “it is the leaders of rogue States who set the example, brutalize their people, celebrate violence, and – worse than that – through their chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, provide a tempting arsenal for terrorists to use.”\textsuperscript{708} According to Secretary Straw, there was no doubt that Iraq threatened the international community. However, despite the unanimity of the Security Council when it had offered collective support for the U.S. led initiative to combat terrorists in Afghanistan, there was no support among Security Council members for a repeat in Iraq. Russia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov warned that “we must be careful not to take unilateral steps that might threaten the unity of the anti-terrorist coalition.”\textsuperscript{709} The mixed response from ministers at the Security Council suggested that the U.S. had not done enough to argue the importance of confronting Iraq. Secretary Powell simply explained that “we cannot shrink from the responsibilities of dealing with a regime that has gone about the development, the acquiring and the stocking of weapons of mass destruction, that has committed terrorist attacks against its neighbours and against its

\textsuperscript{706} Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, 350.
\textsuperscript{708} Ibid. 8.
\textsuperscript{709} Ibid. 15.
own people and that has trampled the human rights of its own people and its neighbours.”

According to Powell, there was no doubt that Iraq presented a threat to international peace and security under the aegis of the global war on terror, and the U.S. was prepared to confront that threat.

On January 27, Hans Blix and Mohammed el-Baradei, tabled their first reports of the preliminary UNMOVIC and IAEA weapons inspections. Blix began by clarifying that the 1999 Amorim report was the foundation for the resumption in weapons inspections. After analysing the report, it was clear that its findings did not “contend that weapons of mass destruction remain in Iraq, nor do they exclude that possibility. They point to a lack of evidence and to inconsistencies, which raise question marks and which must be straightened out if weapons dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise.”

Therefore, the primary objective of UNMOVIC was to determine the location of documentation that illustrated gaps in the unilateral destruction of weapons. Although Blix admitted that the recent discovery by inspectors of chemical weapon warheads, that were argued to have been overlooked in 1991, could “be the tip of a submerged iceberg,” Iraqi cooperation had been adequate and unobtrusive. However, Blix worried that the Iraqi authorities did not take the inspections as seriously as they should have, treating the inspectors with a casualness that suggested ignorance toward the situation in the Security Council. Blix’s report produced a balanced appraisal of the situation in Iraq from UNMOVIC’s perspective. Blix later reflected that it was not up to him to suggest what the Security Council should do in regards to Iraq, as his task was “to render an accurate report. That was what we were asked to provide and could contribute. It was for the Council to assess the situation and draw conclusions whether there should be continued inspections or war.”

Although he privately hoped that the presentation would shock Iraq into cooperation, and out of “petty

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710 Ibid. 18.
712 Ibid. 5.
713 Blix, *Disarming Iraq*, 142.
bargaining," he did not expect to see “the hawks in Washington and elsewhere would be delighted with the rather harsh balance they found in my update.”714 Mohamed el-Baradei, however, was far more precise with the IAEA’s recommendations, bolstered by the Amorim report’s findings that the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme was fully decommissioned by 1999. El-Baradei stated simply that after sixty days of inspections “no prohibited nuclear activities have been identified.”715 Turning to intelligence that suggested Iraq had attempted to import aluminium tubes machined to standards that were suitable for use in uranium enrichment, el-Baradei explained that “from our analysis to date, it appears that the aluminium tubes would be consistent with the purpose stated by Iraq and, unless modified, would not be suitable for manufacturing centrifuges.”716 More information had to be provided by Security Council member states before any other conclusion could be reached. However, where Blix was insistent that he could not tell the Security Council how long inspections would take, el-Baradei was adamant that, although inspections would be time-consuming, “we should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programme.”717 El-Baradei reflected that the U.S. response to his report was surprising. Despite the IAEA reporting that inspectors had found the aluminium tubes to be for use in Iraq’s rocket research, Bush stated in his State of the Union address on January 28, one day later, that the aluminium tubes were suitable for nuclear weapons production. El-Baradei noted that “There was no mention of the IAEA’s contradictory conclusion based on direct verification of the facts in Iraq. Nor did Bush note the differing analysis of the U.S. Department of Energy.”718 For all appearances, Bush had made it clear that U.S. intelligence was considered more reliable than the IAEA.

714 Ibid. 141-142.
716 Ibid. 10.
717 Ibid. 12.
718 el-Baradei, The Age of Deception, 61.
As the preliminary reports from weapons inspectors did not produce the immediate results that the U.S. desired, Secretary Powell convened a ministerial-level Security Council session in order to present the dossier of intelligence the U.S. was using as basis for its claims against Iraq. It was apparent from the presentation that the U.S. was adamant Saddam Hussein was involved in terrorism, and had concealed his efforts to produce weapons of mass destruction from inspectors. Through intercepted audio from phone calls between Iraqi military officers, referring to satellite images that showed unusual vehicle movement at sites that had been visited by inspectors, and consulting human intelligence sources, Secretary Powell stated that the accusations levelled at Iraq by the U.S. “are not assertions, these are facts.” Further adding to the dossier of U.S. evidence were eye-witness accounts of mobile biological weapons facilities, rendered in illustrations produced by the U.S., that confirmed the belief that Iraq was capable of producing anthrax and botulium toxin. Secretary Powell emphasised the lengths Saddam Hussein had gone to hide these technologies from inspectors, claiming “Call it ingenious or evil genius but the Iraqis deliberately designed their chemical weapons to be inspected. It is infrastructure with a built-in alibi.” Ignoring el-Baradei’s report that the aluminium tubes were not part of an Iraqi nuclear weapons programme, Secretary Powell stressed that they had been certified by U.S. experts for use in centrifuge design, and they meant that there was “no indication that Saddam Hussain (sic) has ever abandoned his nuclear weapons programme.” However, it was a link to terrorism that Secretary Powell believed would diminish scepticism within the Security Council. According to intelligence sources, Iraq was accused of harbouring al-Qaeda member Abu Masab al-Zarqawi in the North-Eastern Kurdish regions of Iraq. Although those regions were outside of Baghdad’s control, Secretary Powell insisted that Saddam Hussein was involved. Warning the Security Council that they could not ignore

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720 Ibid. 10.
721 Ibid. 13.
722 Ibid. 15.
the presence of terrorists in Iraq, Secretary Powell explained that “Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and Al Qaeda together – enough so that Al Qaeda could learn how to build more sophisticated bombs and learn how to forge documents, and enough so that Al Qaeda could turn to Iraq for help in acquiring expertise on weapons of mass destruction.”

There was no doubt that the U.S. believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein was determined to use them. Issuing a final warning, Secretary Powell stated that “The United States will not, and cannot, run that risk to the American people. Leaving Saddam Hussain (sic) in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option – not in a post 11-september world.”

Condoleezza Rice was satisfied that the presentation was the accumulation of intelligence that had been personally vetted by Secretary Powell, and had best presented the U.S. case against Iraq. It had represented a “tour de force.”

Despite the administration’s confidence in Secretary Powell’s presentation, the Security Council consensus did not change. Secretary Straw was unrelenting in his statement of U.K. support for Powell’s presentation, admiring that “the international community owes [Powell] its thanks for laying bare the deceit practised by the regime of Saddam Hussain (sic) – and worse, the very great danger which that regime represents.”

It was a reality that no matter how powerful the inspectors might be, or how good they were, because of the size of Iraq it was impossible to guarantee that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. Turning back to an historical analogy, Secretary Straw reminded the Security Council that “at each stage, good men said, ‘Wait. The evil is not big enough to challenge.’ Then, before their eyes, the evil became too big to challenge…We owe it to our history, as well as to our future, not to make the same mistake.”

However, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan was convinced that it

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723 Ibid. 16.
724 Ibid. 17.
725 Condoleezza Rice, No Higher Honour: A Memoir of my Years in Washington (Simon and Schuster, 2011), 200
727 Ibid. 20.
would be beneficial if “various parties will hand over their information and evidence to (UNMOVIC) and the (IAEA)…through their on-the-spot inspections, that information and evidence can also be evaluated.” Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov sided with China’s assessment and appealed to the Security Council to immediately “hand over to the international inspectors any information that can help them discharge their responsible mandate…the they alone can say to what extent Iraq is complying with the demands of the Security Council.” Foreign Minister Dominque De Villepin suggested that a third solution to the crisis could be found if the Security Council could agree on a permanent structure for the ongoing surveillance of Iraq. De Villepin explained that a coordinated “information-processing centre…would supply Mr. Blix and Mr ElBaradei, in real time and in a coordinated way, with all the intelligence resources they might need.” Explaining the severity of the dilemma confronting the Security Council, De Villepin added that “with the choice between military intervention and an inspections regime that is inadequate for lack of cooperation on Iraq’s part, we must choose to strengthen decisively the means of inspection.” Stuck in the shadow cast by the debate among the permanent members, Iraq’s Ambassador Mohammed Aldouri kept his rebuttal short. Ambassador Aldouri promised the Security Council that “if we had a relationship with Al Qaeda and we believed in that relationship, we would not be ashamed to admit it. We have no relationship with Al Qaeda,” and that Secretary Powell’s presentation was made “to sell the idea of war and aggression against my country, Iraq, without providing any legal, moral or political justification.” Despite the mixed consensus of the Security Council, the sense of urgency was deliberately orchestrated by the U.S. Condoleezza Rice, explaining why the U.S. was compelled to outline the case against Iraq through the Security Council presentation,

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728 Ibid. 18.
729 Ibid. 21.
730 Ibid. 25.
731 Ibid. 24.
732 Ibid. 38.
733 Ibid. 38.
reflected that “our sense of urgency was driven by two factors. First, our military forces were approaching levels of mobilization that could not be sustained for very long…it wasn’t possible to stand still, since doing so would leave our forces vulnerable in-theater without sufficient logistical support…Second, the President believed that the only way to avoid war was to put maximum and unified pressure on Saddam. That argued for continued mobilization, not pulling back.”\(^7\)\(^3\)\(^4\) The reality was that the U.S. was prepared to confront Iraq with, or without, United Nations support, and despite the reports of weapons inspectors.

On February 14, the weapon inspectors gave their second report to the Security Council. Despite Secretary Powell’s presentation in early February, Blix remained sceptical that UNMOVIC had had enough time to comprehensively understand the situation in Iraq. The inspectors had managed to cover over four hundred inspections at more than three hundred sites in Iraq, and Blix was adamant that at no point “have we seen convincing evidence that the Iraqi side knew in advance that the inspectors were coming.”\(^7\)\(^3\)\(^5\) Blix explained that UNMOVIC had an adequate idea of the condition of Iraq’s industrial and scientific capacity, and besides the small number of empty chemical munitions that had been found during the initial declaration there had been no further discoveries. However, Blix was hesitant to state that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, explaining that “One must not jump to the conclusion that they exist. However, that possibility is also not excluded.”\(^7\)\(^3\)\(^6\) Although, on one hand, UNMOVIC had made progress in destroying ballistic missile systems that breached sanctions, on the other hand, inspectors were unable to verify the status of unilaterally destroyed chemical and biological weapons that were outstanding from the Amorim report. There were suggestions that soil tests might help determine possible destruction sites, but Blix insisted that more evidence would be required to assess Iraqi compliance. In this sense, Blix stressed the good relationship between UNMOVIC and

\(^7\)\(^3\)\(^4\) Rice, No Higher Honor, 201.


\(^7\)\(^3\)\(^6\) Ibid. 3.
intelligence agencies around the world, and was satisfied to see an increased amount of
information passed on to the inspectors. However, Blix warned that “we must recognize that
there are limitations and misinterpretations can occur.” Referring directly to intelligence in
Secretary Powell’s presentation, Blix noted that intelligence had led to sites where there
were no weapons, or any activity indicating otherwise. In these cases intelligence had been
useful for “proving the absence of such items and in some cases the presence of other items
– conventional munitions. It showed that conventional arms are being moved around the
country and that movements are not necessarily related to weapons of mass destruction.”
But, Blix remained unconvinced by Secretary Powell’s presentation.

In his report, Blix had subtly questioned the intelligence that was fundamental to U.S.
allegations against Iraq. There was no doubt of the importance of Blix’s report. Reflecting on
the situation as he arrived at the United Nations Security Council chamber, Blix noted that he
was often mobbed by the media and had to be taken into the building in a car through a
garage. According to Blix, “it was as if the decision whether there would be a war in Iraq was
to be taken in the next hour in the Council, and as if the inspectors’ reports on Iraq’s
cooperation were like a signal of red or green. Although neither was the case, it was a very
important meeting.” Mohamed el-Baradei was under no such illusion as he detailed the
progress in Iraq with the IAEA inspections. Since Bush’s State of the Union address in
January, 2003, the IAEA had been preoccupied with evaluating intelligence that suggested
Iraq had attempted to procure uranium from a source in Niger. As for progress, the IAEA had
uncovered a cache of documents concerning past Iraqi nuclear program at an Iraqi
scientist’s house. El-Baradei noted, however, that the documents offered no new insight on
previous conclusions that had been stated by the IAEA. The documents had been useful in
clarifying aspects of Iraq’s previous nuclear weapons programme that were already known to
inspectors. El-Baradei’s conclusion was concise, stating that “we have to date found no

737 Ibid. 5.
738 Ibid. 6.
739 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 176.
evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear-related activities in Iraq.” The inspector’s reports were dismissed by the U.S.

In response to the UNMOVIC and IAEA reports, the Security Council once again erupted in disagreement. Blix observed that the debate was remarkable because it “seemed like a pitched battle in which the participants had only seven minutes each to send their words and arguments like colourful tracer bullets through the room.” Once again, a ministerial meeting had been convened to consider the reports. Foreign Minister Jack Straw was adamant that UNMOVIC and the IAEA reports were clear that Iraq was in material breach of Security Council resolutions, as there was evidence Iraq was not cooperating with inspectors. The only response that would suffice was for the Security Council to “back a diplomatic process with a credible threat of force and also, if necessary, to be ready to use that threat of force.” Secretary Powell added to Foreign Minister Straw’s speech by arguing that no amount of inspections would diminish the threat posed by Iraq, and that “what we need is immediate, active, unconditional, full cooperation on the part of Iraq. What we need is for Iraq to disarm.” The U.S. was clear that it was unacceptable for the Security Council to wait for inspections to conclude. Secretary Powell went on that because of the threat of terrorism, the Security Council could not wait “for one of these terrible weapons to show up in one of our cities and wonder where it came from after it has been detonated by Al-Qaeda or somebody else. This is the time to go after this source of this kind of weaponry.” Secretary Powell’s final appeal to the United Nations Security Council was the last effort made by the U.S. to receive United Nations approval for a war with Iraq. The effort

741 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 178-179.
742 Ibid.
744 Ibid. 20.
was largely to appease Blair, who was facing domestic criticism and had promised his own party that he would look for United Nations approval before going to war with Iraq.\textsuperscript{745}

The remaining permanent members of the Security Council were unconvinced. Foreign Minister Tang Jianxuan explained that “China believes that the inspection process is working and that the inspectors should continue to be given the time they need so as to implement resolution 1441 (2002).”\textsuperscript{746} Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov agreed, adding that “we should be guided not by feelings, emotions, sympathies or antipathy with respect to any particular regime. Rather, we should be guided by the actual facts and, on the basis of those facts, should draw our conclusions.”\textsuperscript{747} However, Foreign Minister Dominique De Villepin objected outright to the use of force that was supported by the U.K. and U.S. De Villepin explained that “The option of war might seem, on the face of it, to be the swifter but let us not forget that, after the war is won, the peace must be built. And let us not delude ourselves: that will be long and difficult, because it will be necessary to preserve Iraq’s unity and to restore stability in a lasting way in a country and region harshly affected by the intrusion of force.”\textsuperscript{748}

There were no guarantees that a military confrontation with Iraq would produce a safer world, nor a more stable Iraq. Accusing the U.S. of acting rashly, De Villepin concluded “that nothing will be done in the Security Council, at any time, in haste, out of a lack of understanding, out of suspicion or out of fear.”\textsuperscript{749} The accusation added to earlier criticism from De Villepin to Secretary Powell at the Secretary-General’s private luncheon, after Secretary Powell’s presentation in February. It was there that De Villepin chided Secretary Powell, saying “You Americans…do not understand Iraq. This is the land of Haroun al-

\textsuperscript{745} Mann, \textit{Rise of the Vulcans}, 355.


\textsuperscript{747} Ibid. 21.

\textsuperscript{748} Ibid. 12.

\textsuperscript{749} Ibid. 13.
Rashid. You may be able to destroy it in a month, but it will take you a generation to build peace.”

De Villepin’s criticism was prescient.

Resorting to War

On March 7, Blix and el-Baradei gave their final reports to the Security Council, hoping to stress the progress of inspections. The reports would come in the wake of yet another open debate that had been held in the Security Council concerning the situation in Iraq. Blix reported that UNMOVIC was able to satisfactorily perform inspections without notice across Iraq and was being assisted by increased aerial surveillance, both improvements on UNMOVIC’s previous inspection capacity. If the Security Council were to give UNMOVIC enough time, even the outstanding issues regarding additional Iraqi documentation and an interviewing process that was not inhibited by the Iraqi Security apparatus, could be resolved. Blix, instead, turned his criticism toward intelligence that had served to underpin allegations that Iraq had reconstituted a weapon of mass destruction programme, noting that “intelligence authorities have claimed that weapons of mass destruction are moved around Iraq by trucks and, in particular, that there are mobile production units for biological weapons.” Indeed, Secretary Powell had been adamant that Iraq was hiding biological and chemical weapons manufacturing equipment in trucks. Blix reported that “several inspections have taken place at declared and undeclared sites in relation to mobile production facilities. Food-testing mobile laboratories and mobile workshops have been seen, as well as large containers of seed-processing equipment. No evidence of proscribed

activities has so far been found.”\textsuperscript{753} Blix also responded to intelligence claims that Iraq was storing weapons underground, adding that “no underground facilities for chemical or biological production or storage have been found so far.”\textsuperscript{754} In order to emphasise the progress UNMOVIC had made Blix reported that Iraq had taken steps to destroy ballistic missiles that had been deemed in breach of Security Council resolutions. He explained “we are not watching the breaking of toothpicks. Lethal weapons are being destroyed.”\textsuperscript{755} Although the remaining tasks for UNMOVIC were difficult to finalise, they were not impossible, and Blix concluded that “It would not take years, nor weeks, but months” to conduct the necessary analysis on the remaining unresolved disarmament tasks.\textsuperscript{756} Blix maintained that he was in no position to judge whether Iraq was in material breach of Security Council resolutions. However, he had his own definition of his role as weapons inspector. Recalling a conversation with an American, Blix wrote “it would have been presumptuous of me to pass such judgment, and he commented ‘Hans, they wanted you to be presumptuous.’ Well, yes, if it went their way, but not if it had gone the other way!”\textsuperscript{757} Blix’s ambiguity did not provide solace for those opposing armed intervention in the Security Council.

On the other hand, Mohamed el-Baradei was more direct with the IAEA report. Restating that the IAEA’s task was to determine whether Iraq had revived, or attempted to revive, its nuclear weapon programme since inspectors had left, el-Baradei stressed the degradation of Iraq’s industrial capacity since the 1980s, when Iraq was known to have a strong industrial base and a fledging nuclear program. The overall deterioration of Iraq’s industrial capacity was “of direct relevance to Iraq’s capability for resuming a nuclear weapons programme.”\textsuperscript{758}

\textsuperscript{753} Ibid. 3.
\textsuperscript{754} Ibid. 4.
\textsuperscript{755} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{756} Ibid. 6.
\textsuperscript{757} Blix, \textit{Disarming Iraq}, 210.
Much like Blix, el-Baradei was critical of some intelligence claims, reporting that the IAEA had conducted tests on the aluminium tubes that the U.S. had insisted were for use in centrifuges, concluding, “extensive field investigation and document analysis have failed to uncover any evidence that Iraq intended to use those 81mm tubes for any project other than the reverse-engineering of rockets.” Referring to other claims that Iraq had attempted to import high-strength magnets, el-Baradei explained that IAEA experts concluded that the magnets would be unsuitable for use in centrifuge enrichment facilities. El-Baradei even responded to claims made by Bush in the State of the Union address that Iraq had attempted to import uranium from a source in Niger, explaining that “the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that these documents – which formed the basis for the reports of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and the Niger – are, in fact, not authentic.”

Blix remarked later that the U.S. “in its uncontrolled eagerness to nail Iraq to a continued nuclear weapons program [would] now have to live with Mohamed’s revelation and suffer from its own poor quality control of information.” El-Baradei, however, justified his findings by explaining that “because many of the IAEA inspectors were returning to well-trodden ground and familiar faces, the Agency was correspondingly more confident in its judgments.” El-Baradei, unlike Blix, was confident that Iraq did not possess nuclear weapons, nor had to capacity to reconstitute its nuclear weapons programme.

Once again, it was ministers who responded to the inspectors reports within the Security Council. Secretary Powell dismissed the reports outright, claiming that “If Iraq genuinely wanted to disarm, we would not have to be worrying about setting up means of looking for mobile biological units or any units of the kind – they would be presented to us. We would not need an extensive programme to search for underground facilities that we know exist.”

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759 Ibid. 7.
760 Ibid. 8.
761 Blix, Disarming Iraq, 211.
762 El-Baradei, The Age of Deception, 70.
Secretary Powell warned the Security Council that the IAEA had been wrong once before about Iraq’s nuclear weapon capabilities, therefore “we have to be very cautious.”

Referring to the unresolved disarmament issues prepared by UNMOVIC, Powell remarked that the report still indicated Iraq was a threat. Foreign Minister Straw was as dismissive of the inspectors as Secretary Powell. The inspections had made no substantial progress since November, and “It defies experience that continuing inspections with no firm end date…will achieve complete disarmament if…Iraq’s full and active cooperation is not forthcoming.”

The only option that remained, reminded Foreign Minister Straw, in order to see the disarmament of Iraq “is by backing our diplomacy with the credible use of force.” Straw assured the Security Council that a new resolution, co-sponsored by the U.S. and offered as a diplomatic pause, asked for a deadline for Iraq to comply with Security Council demands. However, there was no indication that a resolution that justified using force against Iraq would be supported within the Security Council. Foreign Minister Ivanov and Foreign Minister Tang openly opposed any resolution that included the use of force to resolve the crisis. According to Russia, weapons inspections were functioning for the first time in years, and by prematurely ending the inspector’s mission the Security Council diminished its authority.

The opposition to Bush’s unilateral posture toward Iraq was made more tangible when Foreign Minister Ivanov asked “What is really in the genuine interest of the world community – continuing the albeit difficult but clearly fruitful results of the inspectors work or resorting to the use of force, which will inevitably result in enormous loss of life and which is fraught with serious and unpredictable consequences for regional and international stability?”

According to Foreign Minister De Villepin, the weapons inspectors had concluded that Iraq represented less of a threat to the international community than it did in 1991, and, therefore,
Iraq was disarmed. Instead of addressing the weapons inspector’s reports, Foreign Minister De Villepin turned his questions toward the U.S., asking “Is it a question of regime change? Is it a question of fighting terrorism? Is it a question of reshaping the political landscape of the Middle East?” Although France had sympathy for the U.S. and its insecurity in the wake of September 11, on a practical level Iraq had no link to the attacks, and there were no guarantees that the world would be a safer place after a military confrontation with Iraq. Under the circumstances, France was left with no choice. Foreign Minister De Villepin stated that “As a permanent member of the Security Council France will not allow a resolution to be adopted that authorizes the automatic use of force.” El-Baradei, after the meeting, was scathing in his portrayal of the U.S. and U.K. treatment of the weapons inspector’s reports. Referring to the IAEA, el-Baradei explained that they had spent “years in Iraq with sweeping ‘anytime, anywhere’ authority. We had crisscrossed the country. We had interviewed every nuclear scientist available. We had destroyed equipment, confiscated records, put the remaining nuclear material under IAEA seal, and blown up the nuclear production facilities at Al Atheer. To liken 2003 to 1991 was an act of deliberate distortion. The die, it seemed, had been cast.” In his concluding statements to the Security Council, Iraq’s Ambassador Mohamed Aldouri reassured the ministers that “war against Iraq will wreak destruction, but it will not unearth any weapons of mass destruction, for one very simple reason: there are no such weapons, except in the imagination of some.” Ambassador Aldouri’s warning added to De Villepin’s early criticism of the U.S. that a confrontation with Iraq was the wrong decision.

Despite U.S. and U.K. pressure on the weapons inspectors, there was no further support for the U.S. and U.K. position since the failed attempt in late February to secure a resolution that authorised the use of force. For a second time in only a few weeks, the Security Council

768 Ibid. 20.
769 Ibid. 19.
770 El-Baradei, The Age of Deception, 73.
held another open debate across two days, showing the widespread opposition of United Nations members to a war with Iraq, other than as a last resort.\footnote{United Nations Security Council, The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait, Document Number S/PV.4717, 11 March, 2003; United Nations Security Council, The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait, Document Number S/PV.4717 (resumption 1), 12 March 2003.} As the Security Council approached March 17, the presumed deadline for the beginning of a ground war in Iraq, members in the Security Council attempted to negotiate a resolution that would place conditions on Iraq for the suspension of the impending war. The compromise resolution required Iraq to complete a series of tasks that amounted to an ultimatum for the use of force, should any tasks be outstanding. However, by March 14, the negotiations were over. An informal Security Council session had heard the concessions, but had produced no consensus as "the draft prepared by Chile and five other elected members was withdrawn, the European Union ambassadors met without any convergence, and a meeting of the five permanent members was cancelled. There was no traction except under the tanks in Kuwait."\footnote{Blix, Disarming Iraq, 248.} In the wake of the failure of the Security Council, and in an effort to create a minor coalition despite United Nations opposition, the U.S. and U.K. convened a meeting in Azores, Portugal for allies that did support the use of force, namely the U.S., U.K., and Spain. It was in Azores, as Condoleezza Rice recalled, that “we sat rather glumly, realizing that a united international community would not materialize. We would take on Saddam either with a coalition of the willing or not at all."\footnote{Rice, No Higher Honor, 203.} The statement that was issued from the meeting was in no way peaceful. Blix noted, as he watched the statement issued live from New York, which “referred to Saddam’s defying UN resolutions for twelve years. The responsibility was his. If conflict were to occur, the U.S. and its allies would seek the affirmation of the territorial integrity of Iraq. Any ‘military presence’ would be temporary.”\footnote{Blix, Disarming Iraq, 252.} However, even at this stage, Blix detected a difference between the U.S. and U.K. stances that intimated there was a possibility for the Security Council to still make its presence
known. Blix recalled that “Bush had talked about the dictator and the cruel regime and what a bright future Iraq would have if Saddam was taken out. Blair had talked about going the last mile for peace and about the need for the UN to strop a proliferator.”\textsuperscript{776} Despite little optimism expressed in the statement from Azores, it was the final declaration that war with Iraq was imminent. On Monday 17, United Nations weapons inspectors were told to withdraw from Iraq ahead of possible armed action.\textsuperscript{777} 

Condoleezza Rice explained that this was not the first time the U.S. had acted with force without explicit authorisation from the United Nations Security Council, adding, “From the 1948 Berlin airlift under Truman to the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the coalitions involved were acting without that specific authority.” Rice stated, “We believed that both Resolution 1441 and the sixteen before it were more than adequate to express the international community’s view that Saddam Hussein was a threat to international peace and security. And in our view, ‘serious consequences’ had to mean something.”\textsuperscript{778} Indeed, George H. W. Bush was prepared to go to war with Iraq in 1991 without the support of the United Nations. However, in 2003, as the U.S. split from the United Nations with few allies, Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his disappointment at the disunity of the Security Council. Instead of preventing the humanitarian crisis that had developed in Iraq, “the conflict that is clearly about to start can make things worse – perhaps much worse.”\textsuperscript{779} The United Nations had to ensure there were provisions in place for responding to the post-conflict

\textsuperscript{776} Ibid. 252.

\textsuperscript{777} According to Sarah Kreps, in \textit{Coalitions of Power}, the failure of the United Nations Security Council to approve armed intervention in Iraq was because of the different interpretations of the role of the Security Council in the decade after the Cold War. The U.S. had shown, in 1991, that the United Nations could pool resources together if the U.S. accepted the constraints of multilateral intervention. In 2003, however, this understanding of the Security Council clashed with Bush’s intentions in the war on terror. Put simply, Kreps writes that “the United States did not expect to need the resources of these regional actors as it had in 1991. It just needed them not to interfere.” Sarah E. Kreps, \textit{Coalitions of Convenience: United States Military Interventions after the Cold War} (Oxford University Press, 2011), 148.

\textsuperscript{778} Rice, \textit{No Higher Honor}, 204.

conditions that would engulf Iraq. However, Secretary General Annan stressed that “under international law, the responsibility for protecting civilians in conflict falls on the belligerents. In any area under military occupation, responsibility for the welfare of the population falls on the occupying Power.”\(^780\) Not that the lack of international support mattered for Bush, and the situation had taken a toll on Blair because of his unwavering support. Blair recalled that “I was about as isolated as it is possible to be in politics. On the one hand, the US were chafing at the bit and essentially I agreed with their basic thrust: Saddam was a threat, he would never cooperate fully with the international community, and the world, not to say Iraq, would be better off with him out of power. My instinct was with them. Our alliance was with them. I had made a commitment after September 11 to be ‘shoulder to shoulder’. I was determined to fulfil it.”\(^781\) With U.K. support, and United Nations warnings, Bush initiated airstrikes that preceded the invasion of Iraq.

As this chapter demonstrates, Bush did not so much as decide to go to war with Iraq as allow it to unfold as a consequence of his domestic circumstances. Similar to George H. W. Bush in 1989, from the outset of George W. Bush’s administration U.S. foreign policy toward the Persian Gulf remained largely unchanged and a low priority. However, unlike 1989, the coinciding policy precedence toward Iraq was not a measured tolerance of Saddam Hussein but the persistent national security threat that he posed. As the September 11 terrorist attacks unfolded and Bush was forced to react decisively, securing military victories in Afghanistan, the decision to confront Iraq was taken for granted and reinforced by the legitimacy that was conferred to the U.S. in the wake of the terrorist attacks. This diplomatic stance was compounded by Bush’s relative inexperience in foreign affairs, relying to a great extent on the dispersal of intelligence across his advisors, to whom he deferred for judgment. The result, as can be seen in the United Nations Security Council, was an obstinate U.S. that was not restrained by the international community in its pursuit of

\(^780\) Ibid. 23.

\(^781\) Blair, A Journey, 412.
anything considered an unacceptable threat. Hence, the diplomatic origins of decision to go to war with Iraq illustrate Bush's belief that Saddam Hussein's previous intentions to pursue weapons of mass destruction suggested he had the capabilities to fulfil them, proving an unacceptable risk to U.S. national security. Unable to be restrained by the international community, Bush decided to go to war with Iraq, confident in the intelligence procured by the U.S. and wary of the potential threat posed by Saddam Hussein.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

“We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it – and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove-lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove-lid again – and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one any more.”

As a scholar of international relations and history, Hans J. Morgenthau was careful to point out that the historian, if they were careless, could derive all manner of lessons from history if they lacked a footing in reality. Diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis was equally critical of contemporary history that was moulded to a set of answers, rather than allowing the history to speak for itself. Therefore, this research is careful to avoid conclusions that are overly prescriptive. However, the analysis in chapters three through to six does suggest an answer as to why the United States decided to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. The concluding remarks that follow restate the research aims that have guided this research, and explore the relevance of this thesis. However, the purpose of this research is encompassed within the research questions that were posited at the beginning of the thesis. In order, each research question will be answered with reference to chapters three through to six. These questions are: why did the United States go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003; what were the similarities; the differences, and what other considerations influenced those decisions to

782 Twain, Mark. Following the Equator: A Journey around the World, (Harper, 1899). The quote is attributed, amusingly, to Pudd’nhead Wilson's new calendar, and can be found at the beginning of chapter eleven.
783 Morgenthau, “The Limits of Historical Justice”, 73.
go to war. As a result, this research interrogates a history of the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

Research Aims and Structure

This research had several aims, including the framing and articulating of the domestic and diplomatic history surrounding the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003; a consideration for how that history could answer the question as to why a decision was made to go to war; an illustration and comparison of the similarities and differences in the foreign policy making process; and the emphasis of considerations from that history that influenced the decision to go to war. To each end, this research has satisfied the research aims.

In the methodology, it is stressed that the explaining and framing of foreign relations, and American foreign policy, are central to the exploration of the decision to go to war with Iraq. How this is accomplished is subject to debate between both diplomatic historians and political scientists. Diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis offers an astute, critical look at both schools of thought in order to deconstruct the major faults afflicting the framing of American foreign policy. Gaddis contends that diplomatic historians lack methodological rigour and fear contemporary history; whereas political scientists over emphasise methodology and trend toward prescriptive conclusions. These criticisms are useful to the framing of this research as they help craft an analytical framework that can compare accounts of contemporary history, and explore foreign policy decision-making. Therefore, this research is framed in the following way. There are two frames that illustrate the origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. In each frame, the history adheres to a timeline that emerges from the inauguration of George H. W. Bush in 1989, and George W. Bush in 2001. These two frames qualitatively analyse historical source material in order to derive an historical account of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush arriving at the decision to go to war with Iraq. In the first frame, the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq
are emphasised. Comparatively, the diplomatic origins are emphasised in the second frame. The purpose of these frames is to highlight the different considerations that contributed to the decision to go to war. In the first frame, the fluctuations of domestic politics influence the timing, rhetoric, and direction of foreign policy as both presidents balanced their domestic commitments with the responsibility for foreign policy. In the second frame, the complex and unpredictable international system is shown to be engaged in a way that reflected each president’s differing understanding of the conduct of American foreign policy, and emphasized the self-interested conduct of international politics. As a result of these frames, there is a methodological rigour that helps reinforce the diplomatic history, yet the frames are not over-endowed with methodological constraints that they inhibit the history that is being portrayed.

After reviewing the literature that discusses why the United States went to war with Iraq, the importance of reinforcing the methodology of this research becomes clear. The existing literature is diverse, yet sparse, when illustrating and exploring what compelled George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush into deciding going to war with Iraq. The framing of American foreign policy that is utilised by other scholars ranges from personal histories to international relations theory, each narrowing rather than broadening the scope of the decision to go to war. As a result of the diverse array of frames that focus on the two presidents, there is a lack of literature that expressly compares the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991, and the decision in 2003. This gap provides a rationale for this research. By developing and establishing comparative historical accounts of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003, this research can also develop and establish a shared history between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush.

Despite the contribution that already exists in the literature, this research explores the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq. Chapter three begins with the domestic origins of George H. W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991. Bush’s domestic justification for intervening in Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait fluctuated depending
on the political climate in the U.S. As Bush was inaugurated in 1989, the Persian Gulf region was an area of minor concern despite the accusations that reverberated in Congress, and the American media, that Saddam Hussein was responsible for human rights abuses. Bush was so confident that the Persian Gulf was a minor domestic concern that the revised and updated policy toward the region, released one year into his presidency, changed little from the previous administration. It would take Saddam Hussein annexing Kuwait to force Bush into reacting to the changes developing in the region, and to shift Bush’s domestic appraisal of Saddam Hussein. However, Bush was deliberately vague when addressing the American public about his intentions and actions toward rectifying the increasingly tense crisis in the Persian Gulf, especially when asked by Congress, and media commentators, just how the United States would reverse Saddam Hussein’s aggression. Compounding matters domestically was an obstructionist Congress that placed pressure on Bush as he sought to resolve a budget crisis. This frame shows that the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq affected Bush’s legitimacy and authority as a leader. Bush would rely on a firm grasp of international affairs in order to lead the U.S. into war with Saddam Hussein, despite the efforts of Congress to thwart his domestic authority.

In chapter four, the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq show that George H. W Bush relied on his diplomatic expertise at the expense of his domestic standing. Initially, Bush maintained diplomatic relations with Saddam Hussein, prolonging the relationship that had been developed under previous administrations. Bush persisted with the diplomatic relationship, despite the emerging difficulties in the region, in the belief that by remaining close to Saddam Hussein he might moderate his actions. However, Saddam Hussein’s unilateral annexation of Kuwait highlighted the inability of Bush to moderate, in any way, the actions of Iraq, and the United Nations Security Council was engaged when Bush sought international options to confront Saddam Hussein. Bush took advantage of the diplomatic environment that was favourable toward the U.S., in the wake of a receding Soviet Union, to gently guide the United Nations Security Council, first, toward condemning
Saddam Hussein and, second, to authorising armed action to reverse Iraqi aggression. Unlike the *domestic* origins of the decision to go to war, the *diplomatic* origins illustrate Bush as a self-assured and confident leader as the United States embraced the international leadership of the United Nations Security Council and confronted Iraq. However, these two frames juxtapose the contributing considerations that influenced Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq, creating a history that contrasts with George W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003.

This contrast between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush begins in chapter five, where the focus shifted to the *domestic* origins of George W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq. The *domestic* context was, from the outset, remarkably different as Bush was controversially elected president after a Supreme Court decision on the Electoral College vote count, and after losing the popular vote. However, it was not only the different election circumstances that separated George W. Bush from George H. W. Bush. George W. Bush lacked the public service experience of George H. W. Bush, and was instead a domestically oriented politician. Wasting no time settling into the role of president, Bush immediately set out to domestically distance his administration from the policies of his predecessor. Despite how comfortable and confident Bush was in front of his domestic audience, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, shattered the peaceful façade of national security, and forced a response from Bush that endowed the presidency with a new foreign policy mission. Vowing retribution against those who were responsible, Bush promised his domestic audience that another attack would never occur on American soil, and as a result launched a war on terror. During this campaign, Saddam Hussein emerged as a lingering threat to the U.S., and Bush, embroiled in a war against terror, justified the targeting of Saddam Hussein on the grounds that he presented an unreasonable threat to the American people. These *domestic* origins of the decision to confront Saddam Hussein show that Congress supported Bush, and the American people helped propel Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq, as the U.S. was still reeling from the attacks on September 11, 2001.
As chapter six shows, the *diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 came at the expense of U.S. diplomacy. George W. Bush differed significantly from George H. W. Bush because he lacked the foreign policy experience that George H. W. Bush had garnered throughout many years in public office. Despite the advisors George W. Bush had arrayed throughout his administration, the U.S. did not have the diplomatic nuance to exert influence in Iraq, aside from the crumbling United Nations Security Council regime that had been set up in 1991 to contain and dismantle the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. In the wake of September 11, 2001, Saddam Hussein emerged once again as a threat to U.S. national interest, only this time it was a perceived, rather than actual, threat. Bush took his administrations fears to the United Nations Security Council with the confidence that had made him a popular domestic leader, and gave Saddam Hussein an ultimatum to prove he was no longer a threat, or to face the U.S. neutralising the perceived threat. The ultimatum, emerging from the precedence set by the war on terror that had been supported by the United Nations Security Council, caused a division among the permanent members. Bush was unrepentant, and despite the lack of support in the United Nations Security Council proceeded to lead a separate coalition of states into an invasion of Iraq after the United Nations Security Council failed to approve and support armed action against Saddam Hussein. These *diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003 show the entrenched difference between George W. Bush, and the decision of George H. W. Bush to go to war with Iraq in 1991.

These two frames, and four chapters, show why the U.S. went to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003, and illustrate the similarities and differences between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. In the *domestic* origins of the decision to go to war, it can be seen that both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush acknowledged the role of domestic politics in the formulation and implementation of a foreign policy. In the *diplomatic* origins, both presidents embraced the United Nations as a platform for American foreign policy, and leveraged, in their own way, the prestige of the institution to implement foreign policy. In the Persian Gulf,
both presidents faced Saddam Hussein, and stressed his evil, immoral leadership traits, deferring to weapons of mass destruction as the justification for military action. However, there were also stark differences between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. The former was comfortable conducting diplomacy, whereas the latter preferred to conduct diplomacy in front of a domestic audience. George H. W. Bush confronted the end of the Cold War, whereas George W. Bush confronted the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In 1991, the United Nations Security Council was the institution that legitimated George H. W. Bush the decision to go to war with Iraq. In 2003, that authority was instead legitimated by the U.S. As a result, the aims and structure of this research stress the importance of historical framing, and point to many similarities and differences in the conduct of both presidents in response to Saddam Hussein. It is possible to extend the analysis to encompass concerns and trends that may have lead one president to rely on the domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq, more so than the diplomatic origins. However, the fundamental conclusion to this research is the role of the president in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, and the different influence of domestic and diplomatic considerations on the decision to go to war.

**Research Questions**

*Why did the United States decide to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003?*

For both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, the decision to go to war with Iraq was considered necessary and imperative to U.S. national interests. In both cases, the decision to go to war took a different trajectory that depends on the similarities and differences in presidential decision-making, and domestic and diplomatic priorities between the two presidents. As is shown in chapter three, George H. W. Bush regarded the Persian Gulf in 1991, as a low-priority policy concern. The primary concern of Bush's presidency was not altering the diplomatic stance of the U.S., but to distance his administration from the
domestic policies of his predecessor that had left a budget deficit and threatened to engulf Bush's domestic agenda. Iraq only emerged as a point of concern in the media when reports alleged Iraqi bureaucrats of being involved in human rights abuses and financial fraud, emphasising the absence of an official stance from Bush. This lack of policy was exacerbated by increasing media scrutiny of Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, and his militant posturing. It was only when Iraq went the extra step, and invaded Kuwait, that Bush publicly responded to Saddam Hussein. The reactive nature of Bush, which included the deployment of the U.S. military to Saudi Arabia to form a defensive line against possible Iraqi expansion, was criticised in the wake of the invasion. Bush was accused by Congress, and commentators, of operating foreign policy away from the influence of the American people. As a consequence, the Democrat controlled Congress used the opportunity to press Bush for concessions over his domestic agenda that reached a crescendo in November in the wake of Congressional mid-term elections. Bush conceded ground on his budget in order to facilitate the smooth passage of the United Nations Security Council authorisation for the use of force against Iraq. Although it was a deft political manoeuvre at the time, broadsiding Congress only consolidated opposition against any potential military actions aimed at Iraq, and the Congressional vote held in January that supported Bush's efforts to force Iraq from Kuwait was a bitter and divisive debate and, although in favour of action, hardly definitive.

In contrast was chapter four, where the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war were shown to be consistent with precedents set by Persian Gulf policy created by previous administrations. When George H. W. Bush was elected president, he made no effort to distance himself diplomatically from the foreign policies of his predecessor, unlike in his domestic agenda. This was, in part, aided by his long experience in the foreign policy establishment of Washington and, after eight years as vice president, intimate understanding of foreign policy into 1989. Indeed, the diplomatic relationship with Iraq was marked with an almost infinite patience, as Ambassador April Glaspie maintained a cordial relationship with Saddam Hussein despite the Iraqi leader's efforts to test U.S. tolerance. Again, chapter four
showed that it was the invasion of Kuwait that forced a change in U.S. policy toward Iraq, and Bush, recognising that the unilateral relationship the United States had with Saddam Hussein would not moderate his actions, turned instead to the United Nations Security Council to elicit a condemnation of Iraq. This decision to confront Iraq through the United Nations illustrated U.S. international leadership, and emphasised Bush’s role in compelling the United Nations Security Council toward achieving U.S. diplomatic goals. Through careful diplomacy, facilitated by Bush and his foreign policy advisors, the U.S. was able to create a regime of unanimous outrage, and multilateral sanctions were focused on Iraq under the authorisation of the United Nations Security Council. When it became clear, four months into the crisis, that Iraq would not leave Kuwait, Bush made the final diplomatic push of resorting to armed intervention to force Iraq from Kuwait, and relied on the diplomacy he had conducted within the United Nations Security Council to legitimate armed intervention in Kuwait.

The *domestic and diplomatic* origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq that are illustrated in chapters three and four show that George H. W. Bush went to war with Iraq for diplomatic purposes and, resorting to his experience as a Cold War foreign policy maker, referred to an international solution for what he deemed an international crisis. Therefore, Bush went to war with Iraq because he believed Saddam Hussein’s *capabilities* defined his *intentions*. If Saddam Hussein was prepared to jeopardise the stability of the Persian Gulf by invading Kuwait over a minor dispute regarding oil resources, then Bush believed Saddam Hussein would exercise that power elsewhere in the region, ultimately, and unacceptably, threatening U.S. national interests.

In chapter five, however, it is shown that in George W. Bush was elected under very different circumstances in 2001. Instead of focusing on differentiating some aspects of policies with his predecessors, Bush immediately distanced himself from the previous administration in both domestic and foreign policies, not because President Bill Clinton had left a damaging legacy, but because Bush had to justify the differences between the presidencies. Therefore,
Bush’s domestic priorities were set around his standing as a morally sound person, unlike the ‘morally corrupt’ presidency of Bill Clinton. Bush also relished the opportunity to work with a Congress that had a Republican majority. It was in light of these domestic political considerations that Bush’s lack of foreign policy experience was inconsequential. On September 11, 2001, that lack of foreign policy experience was tested when terrorists attacked the United States. This sudden and unexpected attack on the mainland of the U.S. transformed Bush’s fickle approach to foreign policy into a domestic campaign to seek retribution against those who had attacked the U.S. Bush began a war on terror that demanded the international community support the U.S., and sent the U.S. military into Afghanistan on the hunt for the terrorist group al-Qaida that were believed to be sheltered by the Taliban in Afghanistan. In the 2002 State of the Union address, it was clear that the initial war on terror had expanded as Bush extended his domestic campaign against terrorism to encompass the ‘Axis of evil,’ rogue states who posed unacceptable threats to the United States. On the axis of evil was Iraq. The swelling domestic support for Bush’s war on terror coalesced around his campaign to emphasise Saddam Hussein as an imminent threat to the United States under the new domestic conditions. Appealing directly to Congress, Bush established support and approval for a push against Saddam Hussein to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, believed to exist despite the international weapons inspection regime that had been established after the war in 1991. With the shadows of intelligence fuelling a domestic news cycle, and Bush and his advisors arguing that Iraq was dangerous, Bush ignored the efforts of the United Nations to diminish the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and proclaimed a U.S. lead effort to disarm Iraq by force.

Chapter six juxtaposed these domestic origins of the decision to go to war with the diplomatic realities that George W. Bush faced. The diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war were based on the accumulation of ambiguous United Nations efforts to disarm and contain Iraq in the wake of the 1991 war. The sanctions and weapons inspections that had been set up to monitor Iraq were envisioned by George H. W. Bush, in 1991, as the new era
of international responsibility, led by the U.S. In reality, the lack of resources, fractured coordination, and policy inconsistency interfered with the efforts to disarm Iraq, and the sanctions and weapons inspections withered over time under accusations of inefficiency and corruption. Therefore, the international consensus that confronted George W. Bush when he was elected president in 2000 had evolved, as the international regime containing Iraq neared ten years old, and the strongly held conviction of grinding Saddam Hussein into submission through the United Nations Security Council dissipated. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein persevered. Iraq was not a foreign policy priority for Bush from the outset of his presidency, a familiar refrain from previous administrations. It would take the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to force attention back on to the Persian Gulf, and the lingering threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Overall, the terrorist attacks marked a broader shift in foreign policy from intransigence to proactive policy, eventually merging into pre-emptive actions. Iraq, with its status as an international pariah, was the definition of a twenty-first century threat. Although Bush compounded the danger posed by Iraq to his domestic audience, U.S. diplomatic efforts were met with resistance. The United Nations Security Council was divided over the insistence by Bush that the international community confront Saddam Hussein immediately, and instead the international consensus was to reinstate weapons inspections to verify any threat. These efforts, however, were doomed to failure because the U.S., the nation that was pivotal to leading the United Nations Security Council efforts, maintained unrealistic expectations for any weapons inspections. With the inability of any diplomatic partners to moderate the U.S., the Security Council remained divided and Bush resorted to a unilateral effort to confront Saddam Hussein. Confident in the intelligence that the U.S. had gathered, and committed to curtailing any threat to the U.S. in the wake of September 11, Bush made the decision to go to war with Iraq with a minor coalition of international partners. These two chapters show that George W. Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq grew from the precedent set by George H. W. Bush, and was defined by the proactive foreign policy stance of the United States in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. George W.
Bush could not defer to his foreign policy experience in order to inform his response to the terrorist attacks, and he therefore relied on his abilities as a domestic leader to act on the international stage. Unlike George H. W. Bush in 1991, George W. Bush interpreted Saddam Hussein’s intentions to pursue weapons of mass destruction as evidence of his capabilities, and because Saddam Hussein was never absolved of his desire to retain or pursue weapons of mass destruction, he was seen as an imminent and unacceptable threat to U.S. national interests. Therefore, the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003 suggest that George H. W. Bush went to war with Iraq in order to destroy Saddam Hussein’s ability to wage war. George W. Bush, on the other hand, went to war with Iraq in 2003 to destroy Saddam Hussein’s intention to wage war.

*What were the similarities in the decision to go to war?*

There are a number of similarities across both decisions to go to war with Iraq in 1991 and 2003. At the beginning of each presidency, both presidents regarded Iraq, and Saddam Hussein, as a low policy priority, and assigned the Persian Gulf as a low risk region because of its relative stability and adherence to the status-quo. This observation shows that the decision to go to war, a destabilising action, was influenced significantly by circumstances as they emerged. In both 1991 and 2003, a crisis demands a response, and Saddam Hussein is the focal point. Both presidents afford Saddam Hussein an opportunity to retreat from his militant position. George H. W. Bush gave Saddam Hussein four months to retreat from Kuwait before pushing for an authorisation to use force, and George W. Bush focused on Saddam Hussein only because of Iraq’s intransigence in regards to weapons inspections. However, Saddam Hussein remains resolutely against the U.S., and forced the eventual decision to go to war. Both presidents also share similarities in the makeup of decision-making as it is conducted throughout their presidency. In both 1991 and 2003, the decision to go to war with Iraq was made and compelled by the president. George H. W Bush, as is
shown in chapters three and four, crafted Saddam Hussein into a threat that primarily confronted the entire world, and George W. Bush, in chapters five and six, crafted Saddam Hussein into a threat that primarily confronted the U.S. Finally, in both decisions, the president committed the U.S. military under an executive order that preserved the agency of the president to decide when the U.S. goes to war.

*What were the differences?*

Despite the similarities that were shared between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, there were differences. These differences can be put down to the character of the president, and the changing nature of politics. In 1989, George H. W. Bush was seen as the continuation of stability as experienced under the Republican presidency of Reagan. This was consolidated by Bush’s experience as a policy-maker, and vice president. Bush was defined by his foreign policy credentials, and at no point in his presidency, or even prior to it, was he at a loss as to how to maintain a diplomatic relationship. Indeed, his decision to appeal to the United Nations Security Council in order to condemn the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait before approaching the American people highlighted Bush’s confidence in diplomacy. Nevertheless, Bush represented stability and wisdom, a fact that belied the relatively lowest voter turnout in modern history when Bush went to the polls in 1988. However, international events would also define the president that Bush believed himself to be. As the last of the World War II presidents, Bush had experienced firsthand the events that had shaped the 20th century. Therefore, diplomacy was practiced with the same assumptions about international politics that had crafted American foreign policy for almost fifty years. With the collapse of the Berlin wall, revolutions throughout Eastern Europe, and a receding Soviet presence in the United Nations Security Council, the Persian Gulf crisis presented the perfect opportunity for Bush to consolidate the United States leadership that had been assumed at the end of World War II, and to utilise the United Nations for the purposes it was envisioned for in 1946.
The diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war in 1991, as shown in chapter four, emphasised Bush’s belief in the international system, and suggested a blueprint for how it would function into the 21st century.

George W. Bush, however, was elected specifically because he was a departure from the previous Democrat administration, and he campaigned on the promise of a better standard of presidency. Unlike George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush did not have an established cadre of Republicans with experience in administration, and was forced to consolidate the ‘second-coming’ of Republicans in the White House. George W. Bush lacked the foreign policy experience that had defined George H. W. Bush and had helped reassure the American people. Bush did have a college education, had owned a Baseball team, and had been Governor of Texas, but he lacked the extent of George H. W. Bush's public service experience. Nevertheless, it was George W. Bush’s domestic leadership that consolidated his presidency, and his advisors, some of whom had served earlier administrations, ensured that Bush had at his disposal a mixture of experience and advice. Bush’s strengths were in his relationship with the American people, and his domestic focus shined through with his response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, rallying the nation to war. This decisive domestic leadership contrasted with Bush’s lack of focus at the United Nations Security Council, where George H. W. Bush was held in high esteem. This lack of focus was exacerbated when George W. Bush, building the case against Saddam Hussein as a threat to the national interests of the U.S., approached Congress to approve and support a campaign against Iraq, before the United Nations Security Council. The domestic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003, as seen in chapter five, demonstrated Bush’s belief in the power of the U.S., rather than the international system, for confronting threats.
What other considerations influenced the decision to go to war?

Despite the similarities and differences between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, there were considerations that influenced both decisions to go to war with Iraq, and these were seen throughout the diplomatic and domestic origins of the decision to go to war. There were elements of the decision-making process that both presidents had to confront that determined the approach of foreign policy to the Persian Gulf. Likewise, both presidents had to contend with the unchallenged superiority of the U.S. on the international stage, and this led to a broader concern regarding the application of power in the international system. However, it was in the domestic origins that the influence of national politics could be seen in the formulation and application of foreign policy. Both presidents understood that their authority was derived from the American people, and that Congress had a role to play in the decision-making process. Therefore, the presence of national politics impressed itself on the foreign policy process to differing degrees. For George H. W. Bush, Congressional attacks over the budget threatened the diplomatic standing of the U.S. and were opportunistic, targeting the president when he was preoccupied with a crisis that was developing elsewhere in the world. Bush returned Congress’s respect by shielding the foreign policy process from Congress, only inviting Congress to pledge their support behind his actions and preventing any Congressional efforts at influencing U.S. diplomacy. The result was a game of brinkmanship that saw Bush led Congress to the point of no return, forcing a vote to support the use of force against Iraq at the very last minute and consolidating the domestic support for an action that had already been determined. George W. Bush, by comparison, understood just the same that the source of his authority was determined by the American people, and his character traits appealed him to an even greater audience than George H. W. Bush. As a result, antagonistic domestic politics did not affect George W. Bush, and he enjoyed a Republican majority in Congress that eased his policymaking. Bush’s domestic leadership helped him to fortify the U.S. in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and to lead the United States to war.
In the diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war, both presidents were burdened with the overwhelming power of the U.S. as it emerged from the Cold War. George H. W. Bush was restrained with the application of this power, having observed the lessons of prudence that had dictated foreign policy during the Cold War, and having been impressed by leaders who had grown within its constraints. George W. Bush, however, was separated from the Cold War by both experience and time, and flourished the full extent of American power as he embraced the unparalleled international presence of the U.S. in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. George H. W. Bush had understood that the U.S. had to accept the role of a reluctant superpower in the wake of the Cold War and believed that the measured application of that power could promote stability and peace. The first test of that resolve was going to war with Iraq. According to Bush, the presence of American power would be enough to guarantee stability. George W. Bush accepted these same fundamentals of American power, but it was not enough for America to possess it – the U.S. had to be prepared to use it. In the wake of the terrorist attacks, Bush understood that he would have to utilise that power to its fullest extent to impose stability around the world, and to protect the U.S. against any possible attacks. But, both presidents reflected the conflicted nature of American power in the absence of a competitor. George H. W. Bush was restrained in using American power because he feared what the repercussions of such unchecked power would mean for the United States and the fragile international order. According to George W. Bush, not using that power was a failure to protect the U.S. in a moment of vulnerability and weakness.

The consideration that transcends from both the domestic and diplomatic origins of the decision to go to war with Iraq is Saddam Hussein. The Iraq leader remains consistent from 1991 through to 2003, and does not waver. Both presidents refer to his vileness, evilness, and compare him to Hitler and Stalin interchangeably. Saddam Hussein’s human rights abuses and immoral leadership are used by both presidents to justify American action against Iraq, and this loathing of Saddam Hussein was even included in legislation that
stated the U.S. would support efforts to depose him from leadership. When George H. W. Bush assessed the risk Iraq posed toward the Persian Gulf, it was Saddam Hussein that embodied Iraq’s expanding interests. Likewise, George W. Bush assessed Saddam Hussein as the embodiment of the hatred and loathing that faced the United States. Saddam Hussein is the central concern that illustrates the continuity between the decisions to go to war with Iraq. Because of Saddam Hussein the wars in 1991 and 2003 were intrinsically connected by the same considerations and concerns, despite the intervening twelve years. The reason why George H. W. Bush did not bring the full extent of United States power down on Saddam Hussein in 1991 was because he did not have the domestic authority to inflict such a wound. George W. Bush in 2003 was free to depose Saddam Hussein because he lacked the diplomatic nuance to foresee the consequences.
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